



Toni Sender

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A GERMAN REBEL

With a Preface by

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LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.
BROADWAY HOUSE, 68-74 CARTER LANE, E.C.4

First published in England, 1940

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PREFACE

by the

RT. HON. HERBERT MORRISON, M.P.

“THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A GERMAN REBEL” is more than an autobiography. It is, I am inclined to think, the best study of post-war Germany from the Socialist point of view that I have read.

Toni Sender, as organizer and journalist, did fine work for the Trade Unions and the Social Democratic Party of Germany from her very early years, and was personally known to many British Socialists and Trade Union leaders as a participant in international conferences. A Social Democrat, she later joined the German anti-war Independent Socialist Party and became a member of the Reichstag. When the Independent Socialist Party was captured by the Communists, she, with her Socialist friends who did not believe in dictatorship, returned to the Social Democratic Party. For many years she was a prominent member of the German Reichstag. It was only when her life was in actual danger that she escaped from the Nazi authorities in the night, the alternative being torture and death at their hands. Twice, hard work and the privations of post-war Germany caused T.B. and brought her near to death. She is now in America, where she is becoming an American citizen.

For the student of the art of Government, for the friend of democracy and the opponent of Fascist

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dictatorship, for the Socialist who desires to see the birth of a new world brought about by peaceful, fundamental, constructive change, the story of post-war Germany is a story of the most profound importance. We should be wrong automatically to apply the facts and the lessons of Germany's post-war history to our own or, indeed, to any other country. We can legitimately generalize within broad limits about the economic interpretation of the history of any country, though even there, despite the high value of the materialist conception of history to our understanding of events, we have to take into account the particular circumstances of time and country.

Germany, a great country with a proud people, rich in art, scientific and technical knowledge, had made an amazing fight against terrific odds in the greatest war in human history, 1914-18. At last the discipline of the German people—perhaps too much discipline—had been broken by economic suffering and by decreasing faith in the Kaiser and the military leaders. When the Armistice came, something in the nature of a revolutionary condition existed in Germany, but it was and is not certain whether it could have been a decisive revolutionary situation. Over considerable areas of the country workers and soldiers' councils were established, but it was doubtful whether the soldiers in particular and large numbers of the workers were ready for fundamental social as well as political change. Moreover, the capitalist Governments of the Allied Powers were ready to jump on them at any moment. The bourgeoisie and even the aristocracy suddenly became very democratic in form. They were ready for the workers to take the leading

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part in getting rid of absolute monarchy ; some of them even sought admission to the soldiers and workers' councils, but so far as Miss Sender was concerned she resisted such admission. In any case it would appear that the leadership of the Social Democratic Party and the Trade Unions was, as a whole, unwilling for the rapid fundamental change which was necessary if Germany was to become a complete and permanent democracy.

In parts of the country the workers and soldiers' councils became real instruments of local government, but as the new political order settled down, and after elections had taken place, a bourgeois republic evolved which remained a bourgeois republic despite the on and off participation of the Socialists in the Government. The mistake was made of permitting a good deal of the old and unsuitable political apparatus to survive and a considerable proportion of the old undemocratic personnel to function. The result was that much of the civil service, much of the military command, and some of the police command, was fundamentally unfaithful to the new political order. The German Republic was nowhere near vigorous enough in introducing big changes into the apparatus of government and into the personnel of administration. For what should have been happening was not so much the peaceful succession of one Government by another Government as the result of a general election, but the building up of a new political order fundamentally different from that of the days of the Kaiser. And unfortunately, throughout wide circles of the political elements of the new Germany, there was either not the desire or the will or the iron determination to eliminate

from the regime those features of the old which could not peacefully live with the new for long. The moral is : Think twice about having a revolution, but if you are going to have one at all, see that it is adequate to the occasion.

Decency, enlightenment and political foresight among the leaders of the allied Powers could have helped in the establishment of a new Germany which could have been an almost certain guarantee of the peace and friendship of the nations of Europe, although we must not make the mistake of thinking that the Treaty of Versailles was entirely responsible for the triumph of Hitler. The German Government had imposed upon Russia severe terms in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, so that the reactionaries of Germany had nothing to shout about. But Toni Sender, of the international Socialists, who had kept the faith during the war, had every right to utter on December 1, 1918, words which to-day sound tragically prophetic :

“ The heavy burden that will follow the war can be borne only by a society that has changed the entire structure of the state. The inexorable armistice conditions are to be attributed not to the revolution but to the unfortunate Treaty of Brest-Litovsk dictated by the regime of the Kaiser. But the other side, those who are now putting their feet on a defeated nation's neck, should not forget that a certain kind of victory may imply defeat in the future.”

Over some years, splendid social work was done by parliamentary and municipal institutions in Germany, particularly perhaps by the local authorities. But the evil influences continued their evil work. The central Government tended to become less republican in

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spirit and action. It tolerated unconstitutional resistance on the Right and crushed it on the Left, instead of asserting its own authority and crushing resistance to democratic authority all round. And then came, on top of the weakness of the parliamentary leadership and the somewhat anæmic character of the new German democracy, economic collapse, financial muddle—the terrible days of inflation, when millions of marks were worth nothing and when the value of money was hardly known from hour to hour.

Take warning from these events. Weakness in democratic leadership, plus economic and financial muddle, may be the prelude to successful revolution from the Left in what was an undeveloped and uneducated country like Russia, but it is more likely, if persisted in, to lead to revolution from the Fascist Right in educated, highly industrialized countries with a big middle class, in countries like Germany, particularly during years of special difficulty.

In due time government was less and less by the Reichstag, more and more by decree. Democracy was passing away, partly because the people were apparently not fit for it, partly from disuse, and partly from conspiracies of the anti-democratic elements. Private armies of all sorts were permitted to exist, a fatal thing to tolerate in a democracy. Conspiracies cropped up in the Army and the conspirators were not smashed. And one of the greatest tragedies is the fact that Moscôw, at a crucial moment, sent its delegates to Germany to split the Socialists and the Trade Union Movement; and in the case of the Socialists, but not the Unions, they succeeded only too well. The Independent Socialists in return sent

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their representatives to Moscow, and successful efforts were made to convert the majority of this party into a branch of the Comintern. The politically ignorant among the great capitalists became worse and worse. They helped the Nazis in order to destroy the Socialists, not having brains enough to see that they would get their own troubles from the Nazis in due course—troubles they are now experiencing. The elements that played into the hands of the Nazis were extensive: the allied Governments, the rich industrialists, the landowners, the desperate middle class, the equally desperate unemployed, and—believe it or not—the Communists, who were to the fore in trying to destroy democracy and who actually co-operated with the Nazis in a number of directions.

And now the Nazi regime has plunged Europe into another terrible war, after blackmailing and destroying the rights of certain small nations. It is an evil thing, this Nazi regime, a public nuisance. It is a danger to all countries as well as to the people of Germany. It must come to an end. A new and better Germany should receive justice and fair play at the hands of the victors, but Germany—and all other nations—should be given to understand that under the new international order which should result from this war no more militarist blackmail and aggression will be tolerated.

Progressive and liberty-loving people of all types are indebted to Miss Sender for this valuable volume. I wish it all success.

HERBERT MORRISON.

LONDON,

February, 1940.

I

GIRLHOOD IN THE GERMANY OF THE KAISER

I MUST have been a very unpleasant child at home. Some years ago, while exchanging childhood memories with me, my sister Recha suddenly said, "You know, I cannot recall much about you in those days, because you almost never talked."

Individuality develops when you are very young ; but it is not always felt as a blessing. It can be confusing, disturbing. You don't know where you belong. An unconscious force seems to be driving you away from those you love. At the same time, you don't know where to go. But better to err alone than to be always guided, protected, ordered.

I must ask forgiveness of my parents for having been such a very disagreeable little thing, so shy and reserved in a gay home atmosphere. My parents demanded unquestioning obedience, and if I had conformed I might have been part of that warm and kindly household in Biebrich. Father was a very cheerful, humorous person, a real Rhinelander, loving life. During his childhood and adolescence he had spent years in France, for his father had been eager to give him a thorough education. He loved the Parisian atmosphere, and it was his dream, once

life's material struggle was concluded, to retire to his beloved city. Alas—it always remained a dream. War and inflation prevented its realization.

In spite of this background, father had a strongly authoritative attitude towards his children. His methods of education were very strict. We had to accept his authority unquestioningly. No contradiction was permitted. Besides, he was a deeply orthodox Jew, for a number of years the president of the Jewish congregation, and he expected us to follow rigidly in his path. During my childhood at home I hardly talked with my father, except on those special Sundays when he took us on an excursion to the Taunus Mountains, into the woods along the Rhine, or to see the old castles. Then he was a good companion, knowing his country well and enjoying wandering through sunshine and beauty. Then I dared ask him questions about the names of flowers, trees, mountains, and creeks. An excellent climber, he would always be at the head of our little caravan. After hours of tramping he would lead us to some quaint inn where we would unpack our provisions. Mother always gave us plenty, and each of us could order his favourite drink. Father would even join us when we started singing folk-songs or marching songs, and for all of us the hours were jolly ones—until the gloomy days of submission and obedience began again. . . .

Mother never came with us. She preferred to stay at home alone and enjoy its quiet. Born in Switzerland of a wealthy family which had come from France, she was of a more pessimistic nature than my father. She had lost her mother at a very early age, her father

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had remarried, and she had had a rather difficult time, which may have influenced her character. She was a very intelligent and energetic person, a severe mother, demanding absolute obedience—a demand which was the root of much difficulty and many misunderstandings between us. I was ready to be convinced, but never could endure being ordered. In spite of this permanent inner revolt, I never doubted that mother was aiming only at our happiness, and I had full confidence in her kindness as well as in her efficiency. Even when more difficult times and more bitter discussions came, I never doubted her good intentions and father's. There was not a single week in my life when I failed to write to them. All this did not prevent me, in later years when I lived in Frankfurt and came to visit them for week-ends, from sometimes leaving town secretly in the early morning hours without a good-bye to anybody. For we might have had, on the evening before, too caustic a debate, in which my parents had refused all my requests. Yet no sooner would I arrive in Frankfurt than I would write them a friendly letter ; the unpleasantness had hurt me more than it had hurt them.

There was one place I cherished throughout the years of my childhood—the very old, big mulberry tree in our back yard with the even older garden house. If I could only vanish by climbing into the tree, dream and be undisturbed, I was completely happy. One day a peculiar thing happened. My mother, our enterprising spirit, had decided to use the very large grounds behind our home as a site for a small apartment house. But then the old mulberry

tree, being in the way, would have to be felled. An orthodox Jew, however, may not fell a living tree—anyone who has ever seen the treeless hills of Palestine can understand this prohibition. What could be done? My father was worried. But one night there was a great storm. In the morning, when my father went to the courtyard, he called to us, and we all stood silent, amazed at the spectacle. The old tree lay on the ground; the storm had uprooted it.

It was quite natural that we children were expected to behave like the children of other respectable middle-class families. What torture those Saturday or Sunday promenades through the old park, with its huge chestnut trees, its lake on which appeared a procession of very haughty-looking swans, seemingly as class-conscious as some of the people admiring them! We were all very carefully dressed, and were expected to return home as immaculate as we had left. What a restraint for a very lively child! How she would have preferred to play with the street urchins on Rhine Avenue or along the shores of the river!

I did not appreciate the beauty of the mountain-crowned banks of the Rhine or the charm of the old park of the former Duke of Nassau, until many years later when I had become entirely independent. One can live in a paradise and still not enjoy it, for the air may be musty.

The best luck that could befall me on week-ends was to have my father order me to stay at home, to take off my Sunday dress, and to remain all by myself in the house. What a wonderful punishment! To

be allowed to stay alone was all I would have wanted to ask for if I had only dared !

My parents decided that I did not choose the right kind of friends and companions. The children of the wealthier families were as stiff as I was supposed to be and therefore did not interest me. Those with whom I could romp happened to be girls of the less well-to-do families, most of them poor students. But I deeply disliked the orderly pastimes of other girls. When my sisters' friends came, I always tried to escape their games. How much better it was to steal away to one of the attics, unseen by anybody. There I knew of big boxes of books, some classics, and the whole collection of the *Gartenlaube*, a family magazine of fiction that must have been fascinating, for I would forget to return to the lower floors until the coming twilight reminded me that it was time to stop. I liked the attics for other reasons. There I explored old costumes of my mother's, old furniture of the family, and many other old things that might serve for masquerade purposes, though the opportunity never came. If I heard a noise, I vanished into one of the big boxes and would not move. Often I heard them calling me, but I never betrayed my retreat.

Once, on a summer vacation, my parents sent me with my older sister and my brother to the Black Forest, where we stayed with relatives on a farm. For the first time I enjoyed liberty. Although I was only nine years old, I wrote my parents that I wanted to stay there and go to school in a near-by town. Of course they would not allow me to do this. When I came home, mother asked me, "Do

you love us so little that you want to leave us?" but I could not explain the reasons that had prompted my request.

The atmosphere in school matched that at home. A very strict discipline prevailed. There was no time for questions from the curious. Obedience, obedience—always obedience! I submitted. Probably few of my teachers had any idea of the force of the inner rebellion that I was keeping down. My parents expected me to remain the best student in my grade even after I skipped a class. This added to my uneasiness. Although I did not share their ambition, I did not dare to disappoint them.

Very often I was terribly bored in school. It puzzled me that I did not like school, for I knew that I was very eager to study, to learn about life and nature. There was only one thing that impressed me in my early schooldays and that followed me all through life. When a new principal came to our school, he had posters with old maxims hung on the walls of the classrooms. Among those in my class, I was struck by the one which said: "*Nichts halb zu tun ist edler Geister Art*" (To do nothing half-way is the way of noble minds). This admonition has accompanied me through life and has often been an encouragement and a reminder of the high intentions with which I started.

Before graduating, I had to try to settle the question of my further education. When the principal of our *Höhere Töchter Schule* called me to his office to ask if I would like to skip a class and graduate at a very early age, it was the happiest moment of my childhood. Under terrific tension, I was waiting

for the moment for school to end. It was my secret desire to leave home, to go to another town, to live by myself, to be free, independent, to live my own life.

A very strong instinct told me even in my earliest schooldays that I had to escape, that Biebrich was not the atmosphere in which I should develop best to become a worthy member of society. I therefore deliberately decided to undertake new studies and schooling that were not available in my home town or its neighbourhood and that would necessitate leaving home immediately. No less important was it that the knowledge acquired would enable me to make my own living as soon as possible. I did not disclose these considerations to my parents when I discussed matters with them and asked them to let me go to Frankfurt, about forty miles from Biebrich, for a two-year course in a commercial high school. My parents were surprised. But since they had been prepared for something much more extravagant, they gave their consent, though not until they realized how determined I was. That I planned not to come back once the two years were over, I told nobody.

What a happy day this graduation day—the open door to liberty. There was only one obstacle to be overcome. I was only thirteen years old, a few years below the age for admission to the commercial high school. Father went with me to Frankfurt to interview the principal. We were armed with a favourable graduation report from the Biebrich school. It did not fail to impress the gentleman, and within a short time I was admitted to the school.

To-day I can confess that I had no idea what sort of calling I was really choosing. I knew nobody who had ever worked in that field. The only factor that counted was that within two years I should no longer be dependent upon my family—that seemed to me like heaven.

The reality, indeed, turned out somewhat less romantic than my dreams. Established in a boarding-house in Frankfurt kept by people who were friends of my parents, I soon became the target of the wit of all the other youngsters there. At first I did not understand. Were they serious or joking? How could they discover so many words in the German language that had a double meaning? This lasted some time and meant a bitter apprenticeship until I learned how to retaliate and acquired the necessary nerve to open the attack.

I very soon discovered that this new atmosphere was not much freer than that at home. The family was as conservative as my own and readily followed my parents' demand that I be watched carefully. Nevertheless, I succeeded in drawing two of the girls of the family into my plot, which consisted of obtaining a job before my parents could learn about it and frustrate my intention. Another partner in this plot was the head of the commercial high school. I talked with him before the end of the last term, asking him to give me my diploma sometime before the term's end if I succeeded in finding a position before then. The idea was to forestall my parents' coming to take me back home when school was over.

Somebody told me of a vacancy in a well-known

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estate agent's office. I applied for it and was asked to present myself. I was extremely excited but did not forget one important precaution. I looked, at fifteen years of age, very childlike. I was small and rather slim, with the face of a schoolgirl; my hair was in two thick, dark braids. Nobody would have believed that I was fit for serious responsibilities. So I decided to ask one of my landladies to lend me one of her dresses and a hat. I put up my hair. The trick worked. I was accepted!

What then followed may seem quite unbelievable to the young generation of to-day. First my parents came to persuade me to abandon the job and return home. They failed. Then followed visits of uncles and aunts and of other members of the family, all trying to make me understand that I was disgracing the entire family by working for a living. I could not agree with this. I listened to them only to become more firmly determined to go on.

In the meantime, however, I had discovered that the job hardly corresponded with the picture I had formed of this kind of existence. Working ten or eleven hours daily only to make profits for the firm did not seem to give more validity to my life.

For years I led something like a double life. I loved my family too much to cause them permanent grief and sorrow—but on the other hand I would not be weak and cowardly enough to give up even if my refusal caused trouble. The only way out was to avoid discussion with my family of the things that were occupying my mind. And I tried to hide all my activities from my parents and from the people in the boarding-house.

It was a laborious, hard, intense, but, as it seemed to us, an interesting life that we led in Frankfurt in those days before the World War. "We" means a group of middle-class girls and boys who desired to work, not because of economic need, but from a wish to become useful human beings. Many among us had left comfortable homes and prospects of an easy life, as I myself had done. Not only did we want to live our own lives, but we felt an urge to render service to the community. Our objective was not to find satisfaction for ourselves alone, but to make life fuller and richer for everyone.

In our idealism we may have started out with expectations that were too high. My work in an estate agent's office, one of the most important in Germany, offered little genuine satisfaction, especially during the first months. For my freedom after office hours I paid a high price. The days seemed endlessly long. The atmosphere in the office was not on a high intellectual level. There I had my first close contact with people of the working class. None of them was a member of a union, or in any way connected with the labour movement. Their desire seemed to be to rise into the middle class, which I considered an unworthy ambition. I had just left that class and didn't like it. My employers at first gave me very subordinate work, filing and copying. I felt it was unworthy of my two years of commercial high school training, but out of fear of losing the job I did not dare to protest. I found a way of defence, however—a well-known syndicalist weapon, although then I did not know that word. I tried passive resistance and slowed down the tempo

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of my work so that finally my employer tried me on another job, somewhat more interesting. Not only was more responsible work given to me, but my very small salary was increased several times. I was lucky to be promoted rather than discharged !

But I overcame the disappointment of the first year after many secret tears. I could not permit anyone to learn of my unhappiness and perhaps inform my family, who would be only too ready to gloat over my failure. And soon I was able to work out a new philosophy of life. Its main idea was : "Life begins when business life is over." In those days, however, that meant that life started only at eight or nine o'clock in the evening.

Although I could not find business activity fascinating, I finally developed some ambition. The firm met it with understanding and finally put me in charge of the mortgage department, thus entrusting to a very young girl employee negotiations with contractors who came to seek money and mortgages for new buildings, dealings with the official appraiser, and correspondence with the mortgage banks. My employers showed more confidence in me than my parents had shown, and they gave me a considerable amount of independence in my work. Later they added to my duties important tasks concerned with publicity.

It was certainly not my personal experience with employers that set me on the road I later chose. My relations with them were always friendly, a factor that may have helped to form a philosophy free of any feeling of rancour towards individuals. From the very first I was offered a great many

opportunities to become acquainted with the working of our economic machinery, and I therefore learned by practice before my theoretical curiosity was awakened.

Soon enough, however, this curiosity too was aroused. A burning desire to understand every aspect of life led me from reading to evening classes and lectures. The problems of religion and philosophy seemed most urgent. Among my friends at this time the closest was Hanna G., a girl who came from an environment similar to mine and who felt the same eagerness to learn. We had nobody to advise us. Both of us had received a conservative, orthodox education, and both of us were tormented by doubts. We could not "think with our blood"—to use the language of the modern barbarians—but only with our reason, our logic. I certainly was profoundly religious in my earliest days, silently criticizing my own family, sometimes, because it did not seem to be devout enough. I feared I could not become worthy of my own ideal of a really pious person, and I suffered deeply for this imperfection.

Yes, I thought, there must be a higher purpose in life than this daily struggle to be successful in a career and respected or even envied by others. There must be ideals beyond the superficial aspirations of common life—ideals of absolute value, perhaps unattainable, but which we must at least attempt to reach.

Later, we became more humble, Hanna as well as I. We did not find the final answers, but we refused to accept faith as a cover for our ignorance,

since we would not regard our ignorance as final. We wanted to leave the door wide open for our searching minds. We refused to erect barriers to our free thinking, to abandon the quest for more knowledge, to renounce the use of our brains at any point. We gave up an easy happiness and harmony with our neighbours in order to claim the right to search for truth for truth's sake. We were rewarded by the joy that came at certain stages when we realized that we had broadened, if only to a small extent, our comprehension of things and of life.

What were we so eagerly searching for? Unsatisfied with middle-class ideology and morals, we strove for a more genuine foundation for our ethics. The deep and lasting impression that Henrik Ibsen made upon our generation can hardly be overestimated. His crusade against the conventional lie had the effect of a clearing thunderstorm. With Hanna and her younger sister Toni I read one after another of his works; we missed none of his plays which were produced. In our small circle we discussed his ideas in an academic way. "By our own behaviour we must give life to this concept." That was understood by everyone among us. To older persons our attitude probably seemed childish, exaggerated. At no price would I, for instance, go to see any relative without feeling honest friendship for him. "No concession to the conventional lie" was our maxim. But of course you first had to detect all these lies of convention within your own realm.

Most impressive to me was Ibsen's *Brand*, the

tragedy of a man struggling to devote himself to his duty. I could not forget the scene in which Brand struggles with the temptation to stay with his sick wife and child, rather than perform his duty, and the doctor holds up the mirror to him :

So tender to his own distress,
And to the world so merciless ;

Alas, Alas !

Is this a Titan's portraiture ?

But Brand overcame the temptation. He left his wife and child rather than desert his duty. Later in life, when it sometimes seemed almost impossible to reconcile duty and emotion, I often remembered Brand's indecision.

It must have been about this time that I said to my mother, "Mother, you know, you must not bother about a dowry for me. I don't want and don't need any." Surprised at first, she did not take my statement seriously. "Another of your crazy ideas !" was her answer. She thought it a romantic dream that would fade with time.

A restless period followed. Almost every evening was devoted to classes. What nervous hours towards the end of the day when my office work remained unfinished ! Would I get out on time ? I never knew until the last second. And not infrequently I had to miss class only because of some detail that might have been handled earlier if my employers had shown a little more consideration for the private lives of their employees.

Besides philosophy, we took courses in anthropology, art, and history. However, we were not satisfied with listening to lectures and asking questions. The

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need for further discussion was felt very strongly. But how to satisfy it? None of us possessed more than a tiny bedroom in a boarding-house. It was impossible for a boy or a girl to receive young people in his or her room. How could we meet? We found a way out. I discovered that the central railway station had a large writing-room which was almost always empty in the late evening hours. There we would go when the lectures or classes ended. We discussed the subject of the evening, wrote summaries of the formal and informal talks, and forgot how quickly the hours passed. Often it was nearly midnight before we were through.

By that hour a new problem came up for me. Would they open the door of my boarding-house to let me in? My parents had ordered that no keys be given to me. I was expected to be home early. Now it was midnight. I stood in the pouring rain on a dark night. There were no lights in the house. Nevertheless, I rang the door-bell. No answer. I dared to ring again and again, with the same negative result. Locked out! More time had passed. It was nearly one o'clock. Impossible for a girl of seventeen of childish appearance and without any luggage to go to a hotel. My first thought was Hanna—but she lived so far away and I was somewhat afraid of the long, lonely trip. Would Leah receive me? She was a young married woman, an extraordinarily kind person with much goodwill and understanding of youth. She received me.

Leah became my saving angel, welcoming me whenever I was shelterless. But, as a consequence, relations with my parents and the friends at the

boarding-house became strained. I could not easily forgive their locking me out so often in the cold night. It seemed to me a very peculiar way to watch over my virtue.

The desire to escape became stronger and stronger. Now and then my mother or father came to see me, and always tried to make me understand that I had gone far enough and should return home.

"It is impossible to continue your mode of life," mother said. "Getting up at six o'clock in the morning to practise the piano [I had rented a piano for that purpose] before office hours, working all day, and attending classes at night."

My answer was, "I am ready to listen to you—let me change my profession!"

I developed new plans. There were few professions which I would not have tried out at certain moments during this period. However, I was not yet of age, and I had to obtain my parents' approval before I could begin training for a new field.

I would go to see my parents to discuss some new project.

"What plan are you bringing us to-day?" my father would ask me when he met me at the station. But his reaction to my answers was always negative. In spite of all the hospitality I was offered, I would leave with a new and deep sense of disappointment. I was most unhappy the day they finally vetoed my desire to study economics. My plan was worked out in all details. I did not want my parents to contribute in any way to the cost of this study, for I had found for myself the combination of studying

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and making a living. But their resistance remained firm. I probably would have tried to pursue the plan in spite of this, but our family physician warned me that if I rebelled any longer and brought further nervous strain upon my father, I might regret the consequences to his health. That, of course, ended it. I did not mean to lead my own life at the expense of my father's.

Back in Frankfurt, the conflict recommenced at once. It was impossible to give up all interest in life and live like an automaton while the most fascinating things were going on. It was the period of an awakening of genuine democratic thinking in Germany under the leadership of Theodor Barth in Berlin. Barth was a great personality and a fascinating writer. We were eager to read his articles in the *Berlin Nation*. He gave us our first political education, awakened in us an appreciation of genuine self-government. Of course, his movement did not last long; most of his followers later joined the Social Democratic movement. Naturally, we were not satisfied to listen to only one opinion. We went to all available meetings of political parties. Soon I felt a temptation to take part in the discussion, but, feeling too young, I did not dare. I found a way out by asking questions in writing.

In our round of exploration we became interested in the labour movement. An office workers' union had just been started. Its membership was not yet more than two or three score. However, there was plenty of room for improvement in the working conditions of this category of workers. Hanna and I did not expect any advantage for ourselves, for we

were relatively well paid. But we knew enough about labour conditions in many other places and we, too, had experienced long hours of labour. Stronger than all these considerations, however, was the feeling: "We don't want to belong to the class of the *idle*, to the bourgeoisie, so we must demonstrate our active solidarity with labour." We joined the union. If our employers learned about it, it probably would mean the loss of our jobs—but we were ready to take a chance.

We were not satisfied to be merely dues-paying members and therefore volunteered to work for the union. How we managed to find the necessary time despite our full schedule I cannot now understand. But we did. The union gave us lists of office workers who were sons and daughters of organized workers. We were to look them up at their homes, to talk to them about the need of labour solidarity. This was not such an easy task for a still rather shy "bourgeois" girl, and my success was not impressive. How many times would the mother, a working woman, receive me warmly and, as soon as she learned the purpose of my visit, put me out of the house. Her daughter or her son was not to become a worker and be drawn into union activity.

Another of our tasks was to watch certain firms during evening hours, especially on Saturday night, to find out how late the employees had to work. These firms were known for exploiting their employees more than the average. Having learned the facts, we had to be ready to testify before the police and eventually in court.

Soon there came my first opportunity to take part

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in a political demonstration. And it was for an excellent cause. Of course we were very young and inexperienced and hardly realized what we were doing.

The voting laws of Prussia before the World War were revoltingly unjust. The electorate for the diet was divided into three classes, along property lines. The most wealthy, few in number, controlled the largest number of seats; the second class, those of medium wealth, held a good number of seats. Those who owned no property, although they formed the overwhelming majority of the population, had the smallest number of seats. The vote was indirect. One could vote only for electors who appointed the members of the diet for their "class." The system was calculated to maintain the rule of the remnants of feudalism and of the owners of heavy industry in this most important part of Germany. All demands for reform were refused.

The left parties in Prussia decided to demonstrate against this monstrous law. Most of us were not of suffrage age, but there was no question about our participating. The first of these demonstrations was a parade, and since it was held on the outskirts of the town, the masses of workers who came were not disturbed by the authorities. The next demonstration was to be a parade in the city itself. The Prussian police promptly prohibited it. The sponsoring organizations insisted that the citizens had a right to the streets and that the parade would be held. My group was naturally in the line of march. It was then that we made our first acquaintance with the old Prussian police truncheon.

While our group was marching along the Zeil, the main artery of the city, scores of armed policemen stopped us and immediately began to beat people.

"What have we done? Is the street forbidden to the tax-paying citizen?" I dared to ask.

The answer was a rain of blows. My back hurt terribly. Never in my life had I been so furious. I tried to rush into the next building—locked! The police still followed me. Finally I tried a door. It opened. The police in pursuit, I ran upstairs and finally found refuge with a strange but friendly family until the battle was over.

That evening remained in the memory of thousands as Frankfurt's "bloody night." Many of the demonstrators were seriously wounded. The entire affair made the Prussian police system more hated than ever. The day of our revenge will come—that was our secret vow; then there will be a free citizenry in a city and a country liberated from the rule of the feudal barons and their brutal mercenaries.

I was much bothered by the danger of discovery, but how could I stop? I was driven by a compulsion stronger than myself and had to go on along the road on which I had started. Not satisfied with only slight improvements in the condition of the working class, I raised the question: "Is it not possible to organize a world in which one can really live one's ideals, not merely profess them?" With a small group of friends, I talked with the librarian in the labour library and thus came into contact with books on socialism. It was difficult stuff to comprehend. We needed time for this complicated

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study, so we decided to meet in the park in the early morning before office hours to read and study together. Older people said we were crazy—but they had no idea of the satisfaction we felt when our efforts were compensated by the unfolding of a new world.

And we enjoyed those fresh morning hours, not only as students, but also as lovers of nature. The park in Frankfurt encircles the inner city like a ribbon. Benches under the shadowy trees offered us a welcome, and the eye could rest on the refreshing green of bushes and meadows. It was still quiet. Only now and then a young boy would pass by on his bicycle, carrying bread to his master's customers. Or from the distance would come the echo of a trotting horse and slowly rolling wheels—the milkman's wagon. Very rarely did a promenader disturb us—the park during those hours belonged to us and to the gaily chirping birds.

The meetings of the Socialist movement, which I began to attend, at first neither attracted nor satisfied me. I hesitated to join; I disliked the unaesthetic meeting-halls, the unattractive surroundings. Some of the lectures were uninteresting. It took some time for me to understand that I had to brush aside this hesitation and help to do things the way I thought they should be done. I finally joined and felt it was a decisive moment in my life.

The following May Day I happened to be with my parents. I was confronted with a problem. How was I to go to the Socialist May Day gathering? I did not know how, but I knew I would certainly go. It was impossible to tell my parents. At the very last moment somebody told me that there was

to be a park concert that morning. I told mother that I wanted to go, and away I went to the May Day demonstration.

It was not very exciting—but I felt I had done my duty. When I returned home, an icy welcome descended on me. Mother and father had learned from some source that I had been at the Socialist rally.

“How could you have the absurd idea of visiting such an ill-famed place, to meet with such a mob?” my mother demanded in a sharp voice. “Did you not think of the effect your behaviour would have on father’s reputation and on his business?”

I thought it better not to answer. It would have made things worse, and of course I realized that my act would scandalize all the respectable people in town.

I could not go on like that, telling lies and being treated like an outcast. The longing for more freedom was irresistible. France became the goal of my dreams. The great French Revolution must have left its traces—it must be the land of real freedom. I asked everybody I knew who had connections abroad to tell me of any opening in Paris that promised a job.

Help finally came from a rather unexpected quarter. One of the young men in my boarding-house, who held a leading position in a metal company, told me that their Paris agency was looking for an experienced person, knowing French and English perfectly, who was also a capable stenographer in German, English, and French.

I did not know English and French shorthand—

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but what would I not have promised in order to get away ! I boldly applied for the position with the intention of learning the things I did not yet know. I was willing to work day and night rather than stay any longer in Germany. My application was accepted, and a good salary was offered. Of course, my parents disapproved, but they realized that this time I could not be kept down. Would I join the Socialist movement in France, my father asked at our parting. Of course I would, but without damaging his reputation, I promised.

How happy I was—the door open at last to real liberty. Paris !

II

PARIS: PRELUDE TO THE WORLD WAR

MY relief on leaving behind the country where I had suffered such restraints on my independence soon was forgotten in an experience which, in the beginning at least, was rather strenuous.

Paris in those rainy October days of 1910 did not reveal all its splendour, still less its hidden charms. Grey clouds hung over the city for weeks. It was not an encouraging atmosphere for adjustment to a new city and a new way of living. The Paris agency of the metal concern fortunately was managed by a fine type of executive; otherwise my early weeks in Paris would have been much more difficult, if not impossible. Since I had studied French only at school and had heard my father speak it occasionally at home, I could both understand and speak the language. But the special terminology of a metal business, with all its peculiar formulas, was, to me, a book with seven seals. I understood little of all that the manager told me during the first days. Would I have to study metallurgy before I should be able to follow? But even more urgent was the need for rapid acquisition of French and English shorthand, which I had professed to know. I bought the textbooks and studied diligently at night.

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No matter how foreign a place may be, you always encounter some kind person ready to be helpful. Of course, I found myself in a trying situation because of my own shortcomings, and I began to wonder what I would do if I lost my job, for I had been given it only on trial. At any rate, I decided, I would not go back to Germany, even if only the meanest kind of work were open to me. I told Lucien, a young French employee of the firm, of my difficulties. I needed somebody to give me dictation for practise in French and English shorthand. And I needed somebody who could explain the A B C of the ore trade. Lucien was not yet fully acquainted with it, but all he knew he put at my disposal, and in the next few months he contributed much towards making me feel at home. We always remained good comrades. In exchange for his kind services I shared with him some of the results of my research into the social and political institutions of his country.

Was I looking for new difficulties? I do not think so. I was just a very curious person. Now that I was living in a new country, I had to acquire new knowledge. Inquiring about possibilities of evening studies, I learned that there was an Association Philotechnique which gave evening classes in the neighbourhood of my office, at the Lycée Condorcet. I registered for two or three evening classes there and later on applied for admittance to classes at the Sorbonne also.

However, what I had told my father at our parting was not forgotten. I looked for contacts with the labour movement. The people I met at first knew little about it. But in the *Humanité*, the daily news-

paper, then under the editorship of Jean Jaurès, I discovered what I was looking for : École des Étudiants Socialistes—School for Socialist Students. I went to a lecture. There I was told that the school held seminars in the more advanced social studies. I was bold enough to apply for admittance to them in spite of the fact that I was not a regular student, had been in the country only a few weeks, was under twenty and knew the language only imperfectly. But a strong will could overcome all this, I thought.

In those years before the war, a German Socialist was received everywhere abroad with the highest respect. It was as if the scholarship of the founders of scientific socialism were reflected on all of us. I nevertheless felt quite unworthy of the highly respectful reception the French students gave me. In the first seminar meeting I was charged to study Werner Sombart's *Capitalism*, first volume, and to report on it within a fortnight. I was frightened, but did not dare to show my fear, and I accepted the assignment.

Now began the hunt for the book. Having to work all day, I could not read in the library, but only at night at home. Unacquainted with Paris, I lost a few days in the search for the book. When I finally got it, I stayed up the major part of my nights poring over Werner Sombart's volume. What a task ! Not yet too familiar with economic terminology in my own language, I had to read in German and immediately make my notes in French. It was almost beyond my capacity. But how could I disappoint my new friends ? Sacrificing most of my sleep for almost two weeks, I accomplished the task, but not too well. I

promised myself to be more careful in the future. I was greatly relieved when all was over and I could again sleep through the night.

There was not too long a period of quiet. I lived then in the rue Lafayette, a rather expensive street, at the boarding-house of an old English lady. She had some very peculiar customs. In her sitting-room, next to my room, she had three parrots chattering in competition with one another. She also felt herself to be the guardian of her lodgers' virtue. I then took lessons in literary French from a cousin of mine, a philologist. While at first I went to his apartment for that purpose, he suggested later that he come to my room for them. Naturally I accepted. Was I not in the free city of Paris? But he came only once. After he had gone, the landlady marched into my room. She would not tolerate visits of men! And she would accept no explanation.

There was only one answer—to move out immediately. Meantime I had learned to know Paris better and to love it. The real Paris was not in the neighbourhood of the Grand Boulevards, anyway. The Paris I cherished was the Paris of the Montmartre quarter, of the Tuileries, the Louvre, Notre Dame, the Seine with its old bridges and the *bouquinistes*, the book pedlars, selling their old books and etchings from their stalls. Most of all I loved the left bank, the Quartier Latin where the gay life of students and artists coincided with serious study and an atmosphere stripped of social prejudice. Even to-day I cannot think of the Luxembourg garden without a deep longing for its old, shadowy trees, the fountain of the Medicis, the picturesque company of the artists,

students, and citizens one met there, the bright colours of olden times captured here as if by miracle.

I made friends with students, French and Russian, and three of us, Lyuba, Evguéni, and I, took an apartment near the Luxembourg garden. Now at last I felt free. For the first time in my life I felt at home!

Our household did not last very long. I later moved to the rue Severo, a short, quiet street in the fourteenth district on the left bank, where I remained for the rest of my stay in Paris. Here I made my dearest friendships, met the most devoted comrades, and knew those great men who most influenced my life and my activities. It was the most active and the most wonderful time of my life. We were young, full of idealism and love of study. We were ready for any sacrifice. All of us had to work hard for a living—but there was always time for the cause.

Of course I had joined the Socialist party. I applied and was admitted like an old friend. Different factions immediately courted me. "Are you a Guesdist?" came from one. "Will you not join the Jaurèsists?" asked the other. And finally the *anciens Hervéistes* tried their best. Was it not enough to belong to a party? I have always felt that was sufficient restriction on one's free will. You always give up some of your independence in joining an organization. I was, therefore, determined never to belong to a faction. It certainly is more convenient not to be bound by any party allegiance. If, however, you are not only a strong individualist but also a human being feeling keenly the desire to be a member of a community, realizing that the well-being of the individual and that of the community are inter-

dependent, then you would feel selfish if you rejected your obligation towards society. Many an individualist also wants a better world. He cannot create it by himself—and he cannot for any length of time live a really full life at the expense of others. It certainly is one of the greatest arts in life to find the synthesis of a strong individualism and an active participation in the struggle to create a better world.

This synthesis can more easily be found in France, with her long tradition of freedom and tolerance, than in any other country of the Continent. There I had an effective schooling in genuine democratic procedure within an organization. In the French Socialist party's tradition there is a great respect for the conviction of every individual member. Proportional representation is the rule from the bottom to the top, in the local groups, the district, the national convention, and the executive. Nowhere is there absolute majority rule. Always and everywhere the minority is given a fair opportunity to express itself, to fight in order to become a majority. And though the discussions, in accord with French temperament, are always highly passionate, one remains friend and comrade to an opponent. Difference of opinion need not engender hatred, although, when you listened to the heated debates every Friday night at our meetings of the famous fourteenth section of the Socialist party of Paris, you received the impression that it was a bitter, implacable fight.

I had scarcely become a member of the fourteenth section when they elected me vice-chairman. I felt greatly honoured but, still more, surprised. How

could I have deserved it, a German, a very young girl in an organization rich in cultured and deserving persons? The fourteenth section in pre-war days was famous for its high intellectual standing and its militant spirit. I accepted gratefully, and I may say I did my best to deserve the confidence that the comrades had placed in me.

This task was made easier by the chairman, a colourful personality who bore the name D. Paoli, of the famous Corsican family of General Pasquale di Paoli. With a tall though delicate figure, thick black hair, a noble face with deep, dark burning eyes which betrayed a great passion, he was a strongly self-willed yet kind personality. Destined by his family for the career of an army officer, natural for a Paoli, he was sent to a military college. He revolted against the discipline and escaped to become one of the best educated and most devoted fighters for socialism. Strangely enough, we became the very best friends, working together for the movement and sharing also in literary and other interests. There was only one passion which the young girl could not quite understand. Paoli never lost a deep interest in the study of military strategy. What could make an enthusiastic Socialist take such an interest in strategy? Was it the restless blood of his great ancestor, the famous general, who in a heroic war had liberated Corsica from domination by Genoa and had given to that short-lived island-republic a constitution which set down the rights of man years ahead of The Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution? Reborn in this young twentieth-century Socialist was his ancestor's qualities of a fighter—a fighter for his

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country's freedom and for the freedom of the people within his country.

It was still more surprising that Paoli, the Corsican, attempted, with me, to introduce some German organizational methods into the French movement. The Latin temperament of the French makes them less steady. Therefore, their organizations are often like a sieve—a permanent coming and leaving. To-day they enter a party—to-morrow they drop membership, though not allegiance. We tried to make the ties to the movement more solid by means of education and by the formation of small units with very close contact between the subleader and the members. As far as I could judge, on the basis of a short-term experience, the system seemed to work.

Of course our collaboration was not always smooth and easy-going. Paoli would be carried away by his rash temper, and I certainly was sometimes too sensitive. Then Grazziani, another Corsican, though normally much more hot-headed and unbridled than I, would do his best to make us forget the incident. He really was a good Samaritan, this unceremonious fellow, now a member of the French Chamber of Deputies, who did not like study too much but who had a lot of common sense and was an impressive speaker.

We scarcely lacked speakers in our section. Almost every member was an orator! Many of the French are born speechmakers. Every Friday night we had our lecture meeting in a hall at the back of a public-house. It was not very elegant or pleasant, but all that was forgotten once the meeting started. Passionate debate always followed the lecture, a real intellectual fight,

in which we all took part. It was a good school in logic and clear expression. When at midnight or at one o'clock the innkeeper came to tell us that it was time to leave, we had never finished. But it was not the end. We went to the nearest café, and there the discussion was continued.

We all grouped around Père Bracke, our member of the Chamber, deeply beloved by all of us. Alexandre Bracke—"Bracke" was merely a so-called political name—was also well known under his real name, Desrousseaux; he was professor of Greek at the Sorbonne and one of the greatest scholars in the social sciences. Heavy-set, of the Flemish build frequently met in northern France, he personifies the very finest type of leader and friend. He always helped me in my studies and to this day remains one of my dearest friends. He is not the typical French orator; nevertheless, he was listened to most closely because we all knew that he had something substantial and valid to tell us. Though he was among the most highly respected, one never discovered in him a single trait of haughtiness. He was the genuine friend of the working man; and not in a distant way, for he would sit down with a worker and over a cup of coffee discuss his political problems. Bracke knows the soul of his people and these people love him. He does not speak foreign languages, but he knows many of them very well and has translated into French many important foreign works, especially of the German sciences. One may imagine how greatly the young girl appreciated the discussions with this man into the late hours of the night. It was always with deep regret that we finally parted.

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My section made me a permanent delegate to the Federal Council of the Socialist Federation of the Seine. It generally met on Monday nights to discuss political or tactical questions. The delegates of our fourteenth section were looked on as the most spectacular—sometimes also, I admit, as the most unruly. We certainly never avoided taking a definite stand, and we fought hard for our views. Not rarely, however, we were defeated. One of the most interesting sessions of the Federal Council took place when Captain Gérard, a high General Staff officer and closest friend of Jean Jaurès, lectured on Jaurès' new book, *The New Army*, dealing with the timely topic of the defence of the republic and the democracy. There certainly never was a more glowing friend and fighter for peace than Jean Jaurès. But he was not of the purely emotional, defeatist sort. He understood that a democracy had to be militant and he showed us how intimately connected was a true democracy with the character of the army. Captain Gérard, of tall stature and a fine spiritual face, gave us two of the most interesting and scholarly lectures we ever heard.

How could I find the time to engage in so many activities in those happy though restless years? I did not deceive myself about my need for further study. My special interests were law and economics. But the daytime was taken by office work, so I went to the director of the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, the famous old library near the Panthéon, to obtain a special permit to work there at night. Many evenings I spent there alone or with a student friend.

Some of the earlier morning hours, following my Frankfurt custom, were spent with a young French

student reading Karl Marx's *Capital*, this time in French.

Though it was my conviction that you learn to know another people really well only when you share their daily life, their joys and their sorrows, but never when you spend your leisure time with your compatriots, I did not neglect the Germans in Paris. Sascha and Wally Grumbach would not have permitted me to do so. Sascha was a young Alsatian, a capable journalist, correspondent for more than a dozen German labour papers. He is now a member of the French Chamber and active in foreign affairs in Paris and Geneva. When we met in Paris, however, he was connected with the German movement. Wally, his wife, a beautiful brunette, an able music student with an agreeable alto voice, daughter of a wealthy family, had abandoned home and career and had secretly run away from Frankfurt to join Sascha in Paris and to marry him. With the Grumbachs I went almost every Saturday night to the German Socialist Reading Club, which had rented quarters in a co-operative building in the rue de Bretagne in order to offer a library and reading-room to Germans in Paris.

The Saturday meetings were always well attended—in those days, politically somewhat quieter than the present, there seems to have been a greater thirst for knowledge. The book-store, improvised every Saturday night in the meeting-hall, sold on each of those evenings from 200 to 300 francs worth of books, more of them scientific than fiction. Usually on these Saturday nights some of the French trade unions would send spokesmen to collect funds for their members

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on strike. They knew it would be worth while. Although most of the club members were workers, they always gave their share. It was in the club that I met Otto Pohl, an Austrian, correspondent of the *Wiener Arbeiterzeitung* and the Berlin *Vorwärts*. Otto Pohl was a highly cultured and intelligent person and a genuine "Bohemian". Though I never saw him again, I have not forgotten his spirited chatter in "his" café on the Boulevard Saint-Michel. Shortly after the World War he became Austrian ambassador to Moscow. But it is difficult for me to imagine that he could have felt at home anywhere but in the Latin Quarter of Paris.

Sunday afternoons belonged to Wally and me. We had managed to take apartments in the same building and we helped each other as much as possible. She was an art critic for some German papers and received press, theatre, and concert tickets, which we used together. Our curiosity also led us to visit the art salons. This introduction to French painting, especially to the Impressionists and to the first beginnings of futurist and cubist art, awakened in me a preference for the Impressionist school that became important in some of my later work. On Sunday afternoons, however, Wally and I studied history and socialism. On the top floor of the modest building on the quiet rue Severo, we spent some of our happiest days—learning, discussing, enjoying liberty in our plain though cosy rooms.

It was through the Grumbachs and the German Club that I met many visitors from abroad. One of them was Engelbert Pernerstorfer, the great Austrian Socialist leader, even then an old man, but still pos-

sessed of all his chivalry and charm. One day Karl Liebknecht arrived with his wife, Sonya, to spend a vacation in Paris. Karl, later one of the most spectacular and courageous fighters against the war, was at this time a rather reserved although interesting companion. Naturally we did not miss the opportunity of having him give a lecture in the German Club. He brought us valuable information, and our French friends thought that the message should be given also to the French people. Jean Longuet, a grandson of Karl Marx, had made an appointment with Liebknecht for an interview for *Humanité*. When Longuet came to the club, Karl at first would not talk to him. He did not want to give interviews. We others felt terribly embarrassed over the situation. Not only was it an affront to the French party, but Longuet was one of the most internationally minded, kind, and sincere of comrades. Some of us, therefore, intervened and after strenuous efforts succeeded in making Karl change his mind. We compensated him and Sonya by showing them around Paris by day and night. We all had a jolly time. It must have remained a bright spot in his memory, especially in his subsequent terrible years, first in the trenches—where he went although he was a member of the Reichstag!—and later in his fight against the army and civil authorities because of their war policy, a highly courageous struggle that ended in his and Rosa Luxemburg's assassination in January, 1919, by gangster militarists.

As speakers, however, none of the Germans—I had heard August Bebel and Ludwig Frank, both great orators—impressed me so much as the French.

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I never missed a lecture by Francis de Pressensé if I could help it. Pressensé, scion of an aristocratic family, former under-secretary to the Minister for Public Education, former diplomat, and one of the editors of the conservative *Temps*, had thrown himself body and soul into the Dreyfus affair. His profound sense of justice was aroused, and this historical struggle led him to look more closely behind the scenes of a corrupt ruling clique and into the background of the social struggle. It was *l'affaire* that made this aristocrat a convinced Socialist who put his great and noble talent and his wide knowledge at the service of the workers. He lectured almost exclusively on foreign affairs. This was also his main interest in the Chamber of Deputies. He had no attributes of an orator, neither the dramatic language nor the gestures. Francis de Pressensé was partly paralysed and therefore spoke almost without gestures. But you always felt on hearing him that you had learned an astonishing amount. There was another feeling aroused by Pressensé's quiet presentation—a feeling of which I most strongly became aware during his exposure of Italy's war in Tripoli, her first "successful" North African adventure. He awakened in you the idea that even in politics and especially in foreign affairs there must be morals ; that the right to justice must be granted to all peoples, "civilized" or "primitive". The French workers must have felt this too, for they always crowded the lectures of this friend who was so different from ordinary Latin speakers, who was both a teacher and a preacher.

What a contrast to this man was Gustave Hervé, the former anarchist who had spent years in jail for

his violent anti-militarist propaganda ! While in jail, he had begun to read and to change his mind. Incidentally, he has continued to change his mind, and now he is one of the staunchest nationalists in France. Hervé was always sincere. Charles Rappoport, later to become a French Communist leader, used to say of Hervé : " Hervé is always sincere. He says what he thinks. Unfortunately he does not think ! "

When I first met Hervé, he had just been released from jail and was to address a meeting to explain to the public, including his former anarchist friends, now bitter foes, why he had abandoned anarchism and become a Socialist. I, too, was curious and went to the Salle Wagram. There was great congestion at the entrance ; one sensed excitement. I was shoved into the hall, pushed to the front row. Rapidly the galleries also filled. There was electricity in the air. We waited for Hervé. The crowd became impatient. The longer we waited the more oppressive became the heat, the greater the nervousness. The tension grew tauter and tauter. Finally Hervé came on the platform—square-built, clad in a severe, monk-like habit. He started to speak. But from his first words I felt that something must soon happen. And it came quickly. Loud and violent interruptions, insults, reproaches. Then came the first shot. Many more followed. It became a terrible nightmare. Wounded were carried away. Chairs were thrown from the gallery. The tables crashed. The lighting fixtures began to fall in fragments—there was terrific confusion and panic. Some tried to run away. It was impossible. I and those about me had to sit and wait in the hope that we would not be wounded. Police finally arrived.

Some of the anarchists with guns were arrested. These men could never forgive Hervé for abandoning his former creed.

A new movement, to some extent started by Wally and me, was the women's labour organization. There were women in the Socialist party, some of them very clever and efficient. But they were a very small number. The great majority of French women kept aloof from the political scene. It has always been my conviction that you can never accomplish fundamental social changes in a free society without the collaboration of women, certainly not without their sympathy. In all Catholic countries, and also in France, women kept away from the political scene. Something had to be done about it, we felt.

Wally and I met with Elizabeth Renaud, tried feminist, Marianne Rauze, Alice Jouenne, a teacher, Suzanne Gibault, and others and founded a Socialist women's group. I took it upon myself to visit all sections and groups of the labour movement to stir up their interest. For weeks my evenings, except those reserved for classes, were entirely given to this job. As a by-product, I got to know all Paris, not always from its most pleasant side. Some workers' groups met in real dens. The results of the first attempts were quite encouraging. At that time, in spite of their theory, there were not many feminists among the male Socialists. However, they received with good will the rather girlish-looking woman I still was, and seemed to give a cordial response to the appeals I made to them in short speeches. On I went, evening after evening. The ice seemed to be broken. Alas—the war later destroyed this promising seed.

Great compensation for this hard work were those rare Saturday luncheons of a small group of friends with Jules Guesde. He was one of the old guard of international socialism. He had met Marx and Engels in London and had worked with them on the party programme. He was a genuine example of the prophet who devotes his life to a great cause. His serious, beautiful head, with its penetrating blue eyes, aquiline nose, and long grey beard, was immediate revelation of an extraordinary personality. This great scholar, whose unusual intelligence would have opened for him a brilliant career, lived all his life in poverty, often in misery, because he gave himself entirely to the service of the great cause he had chosen, wandering about the entire country from city to city, teaching, educating, stirring the masses to thought and activity. A special gift of his was to pick the right men to carry on the work started by him. He kept close contact with these men, advising them and thus carrying on a most systematic political education, an education that bears its fruits to the present day. Apart from this work, Guesde wrote excellent pamphlets, published a magazine, sat in the Chamber, and participated in the work of the Socialist International. His speeches were sarcastic, pungent, unshakably logical. But he was inexorable if you violated the Marxian theory, of which he felt himself to be the guardian.

During our luncheons, Guesde showed us his most lovable side. Of course his disciple, Professor Bracke, was present to smooth the waves if necessary. Among the discussions we had I remember one dealing with nationalization of industry. Guesde severely condemned its identification in the present society with

socialization. Genuine socialization, in Jules Guesde's view, could exist only when a real people's nation was established by the abolition of classes, when the government of men was replaced by the administration of things. I could not agree with everything he said, but I was wise enough not to start a discussion every time that happened. In some respects, Guesde seemed to be too absolute, too much inclined to "all or nothing", though he certainly favoured reforms that would make life easier for the poor and increase their liberty of action.

The spring of 1914 brought a very exciting time. It was the period of general elections, which meant a heavy task for Paoli and for me. We had to organize the campaign in two constituencies, one of them, near the fortifications, with no chance for our candidate to be elected, and the other one that of our friend Bracke, which could be held only by a vigorous fight. The struggle promised to become a heated one. The Socialist party had decided to oppose with energy the government's bill for a three-year compulsory military service: to make opposition to this the central point of the campaign.

It always was and still is one of the characteristics of the French Socialist movement that all activity in the constituencies is exclusively honorary and is carried on without any salaried help, even during the actual campaign.

"Father" Bracke sent word one day that he wanted to see me as quickly as possible.

"You must take an active part in this campaign," he declared. "We shall begin with a women's meeting at which you are to be the main speaker."

"Impossible, Father Bracke."

"But have you not taken part in our discussions? Why not address public meetings also?" he persisted.

"There are many reasons. You are not accustomed in this country to women leading a political campaign; I am not only a woman, but a German. This three years' conscription bill which we are opposing so bitterly is the French answer to the German armament bill. It is too delicate a task for a German woman to argue with a French audience."

"Not at all," was Bracke's reply. "You shall speak just because you are a woman and a German. We want to demonstrate that we mean business when we declare ourselves in favour of the principle of internationalism and of woman suffrage."

It was a fact that women in France at that time did not have the right to vote—they do not have it even now. Not all legislators are such convinced feminists as Bracke. Of course he was acting faithfully in the tradition of the great master, Jules Guesde, in regarding the campaign as an excellent opportunity for political education.

My heart beat swiftly when the day of the first meeting approached. When I came to the hall, it was already overcrowded. People were standing in the streets. The experiment, so far, seemed to be successful—it was something new and people were curious. We had a number of speakers, some of them novices like me. Enthusiasm was running high and we all were affected. The meeting was a great success and an encouragement for further ones.

One cannot run a campaign exclusively with enthusiasm. It cannot be waged entirely without money,

but our treasury was completely empty when the fight started. There was one way out—to approach wealthy members, patrons. Paoli as well as I rejected that way because we did not want to place the organization under any kind of obligation to such persons. What then? The printer had to be paid, almost at once. Such expenses run very high in France, since the campaign is fought in large part with elaborate posters, space for which is provided by the city for all parties. Both of us finally agreed that we had to use our own small bank accounts for campaign purposes and that we would live during those weeks on as little as possible, in order to place the rest at the party's disposal.

Among our outside speakers we were fortunate enough to secure the greatest speaker I have ever heard, Jean Jaurès. I immediately fell under the spell of his magnetic personality. This man with his broad, extensive learning, with an extraordinary wealth of imagination, whose every word always won the highest respect wherever he might appear—this genius was at the same time of a touching simplicity. I felt free to remind him of our first meeting, years before in Germany. He had come through Frankfurt with Socialists from several countries on his return from an international convention. He was scheduled to address a mass meeting in the open air. The Prussian police showed their most obstructive side and declared that only speeches in the German language might be made. But this time they were outwitted. Jaurès declared himself ready to speak in German! His German was not perfect and he was unprepared for this sudden adventure. But those among us who

knew French grouped ourselves around the platform, and as Jaurès found himself at a loss for a word in German, we quickly supplied him with it. The effect of Jaurès' speech was heightened—the audience admired even more the great French orator who could address them in their own language. In addition they had the satisfaction of besting the Prussian police.

I have never since listened to a speaker whose personality and speech produced such a powerful effect. Jaurès was squarely built, his stature a reminder of his peasant origin. His gestures were sparse and almost heavy. But what a clear, brilliant mind, what rigorous logic ! A beauty of language, an abundance of images often taken from nature, a profound idealism flowed from his words. A master of the word, an artist of improvisation, Jaurès nevertheless did not simply improvise. Although he used to speak without notes, every speech had been well thought through previously. It is not surprising, therefore, that this man, who made so many speeches, never had to retract a word ; nor did Jaurès the journalist ever have to rectify a mistake. He was always conscious of the great responsibility of the written as well as of the spoken word.

Of course, our fourteenth Paris section, with its ever-ready eagerness to fight, could not go through the entire campaign altogether peacefully. As I have said, the campaign was based on the Socialist opposition to the three years' conscription bill. In the second constituency where we had to organize the fight, and where our candidate had no chance of being elected, our section had decided to retire our candidate before the second ballot (necessary when none

of the candidates received a majority in the first ballot) without declaring ourselves for either of the two remaining candidates. The candidate of the Radical party, whose meetings we had followed, had never committed himself clearly for or against the conscription bill. Why should we advise our voters to give a preference to this non-committal candidate, we argued. When Jaurès learned of our decision, he opposed it strongly in the *Humanité*. "We must give preference to the progressive as against the reactionary candidate," he urged. We were shocked. Immediately we sent Jaurès an angry reply. It is possible that in our youthful ardour our language overstepped proper bounds.

The last meeting planned for our other candidate, Professor Bracke, was to reach its height by a demonstration, with Jaurès again as the main speaker. The meeting started. One speaker after another took the floor. Jaurès was not there yet. I looked at Paoli—he was seeking my eyes. Would he come? Had we gone too far in our reply to his editorial? I did not feel at all comfortable. All of a sudden there was a movement in the hall—the crowd was cheering Jaurès! He had come, and he had arranged to make our meeting his last of the evening—naturally he had to address many that night—in order not to have to rush away. He wanted to stay with us after the meeting in order to show that he did not mind our opposition. A genuine democrat and a magnanimous man!

How far removed was Jaurès from the faintest trace of haughtiness! Every meeting with him was, therefore, a real experience—especially the one to which a circle of his friends invited me when Jaurès came

back from his trip to South America. On his way he had visited Portugal, the young republic, and had been received by its parliament with all possible honours. We were all listening breathlessly to his account of his experiences, when he suddenly interrupted himself. He had seen a comrade take from his pocket a photograph of his little daughter and show it to his friend. Jaurès wanted to see the child's picture. He had so much warm feeling for the plain, human side of life !

What happy hours when late in the night of that April Sunday the election returns became known. Arm in arm, Bracke with us, we went singing through the streets—our fight against the conscription bill crowned by a marvellous success. One hundred and two Socialist deputies had been elected—Bracke among them. The people had approved our demands for peace.

A very short time afterwards the shots of Serajevo alarmed the world. Greater mischief was anticipated. But we did not abandon hope for the maintenance of peace. Most opportune seemed to be the International Socialist Congress called for the late summer of 1914 at Vienna. This congress was to deal with a motion presented by the French Socialist, Edouard Vaillant, and the old English leader, Keir Hardie—a motion that foresaw the necessity for the declaration of a general strike in case of war. The French party, faithful to its democratic tradition, gave its party membership an opportunity at a national convention to discuss the agenda of the Vienna congress. I was a delegate at this Paris convention, which later made me a delegate to the Vienna congress. I still see before my

eyes the figure of the aged, venerable fighter, Vaillant, the former Blanquist and member of the Paris Commune. All gave him due respect, but we nevertheless could not shut our ears to the counter-arguments which Jules Guesde presented to the convention with deep passion and a penetrating logic. Guesde declared that calling a general strike in the event of war would be possible only in countries with a very advanced labour movement, with the result that backward countries, unhampered by an effective strike, would be given great advantages. This would be a result certainly not intended by the authors of the motion.

But when the delegates to the Paris convention separated, there was already doubt whether any of us would have the opportunity to go to Vienna. On the international horizon dark clouds were gathering. Temporarily the attention of the French, especially that of the Parisians, was captured by another event : the trial of Madame Caillaux, wife of a French cabinet minister. Madame Caillaux had armed herself with a revolver, had gone to the editorial department of the reactionary Paris paper *Figaro*, had obtained admission to the editor-in-chief, Calmette, and had shot him dead. What had provoked this extraordinary act? Calmette had been carrying on a malicious campaign of slander in his paper against Joseph Caillaux and had uttered calumnies against his married life. Most Parisians sided with Madame Caillaux, who had not told her husband of her intention before committing the murder. All Paris talked of the trial as if the life and liberty of Madame Caillaux were much more important than the impending decision for war or peace.

In our circle, of course, everyone was concentrating on the development of the international scene. Impatiently we were awaiting the return of our delegates to the meeting of the executive of the Socialist International, called in great haste. "Father" Bracke had told me he would see Jaurès immediately after his return.

Would war really come? As I was wont to do during critical days, I spent much time in the streets, trying to catch the temper of the people. On the Grand Boulevards the *Camelots du roi* were raging. Noisy young royalists shouted the slogan "*A Berlin!*" The nationalistic mob already seemed to be loose. But when I entered my friends' circle the same evening, I met a different atmosphere. Here they had not yet abandoned hope for the preservation of peace. Were not the masses of the people demonstrating for peace in all parts of Germany? And here in France Jaurès was using all his influence to maintain peace, asking the government not only to moderate its own measures but to influence also its Russian ally towards a temperate course. As long as Jaurès hoped—we were hopeful.

So we sat together the evening of this last July day of 1914. My friends knew that my position was an especially difficult and painful one. As a German, I could not stay in France in case of war without being put in a concentration camp. Many kind offers were made to me—that I should stay in France in any event, that comrades would hide me from the authorities. I must not leave them, they urged. Deeply touched by such sincere friendship, I nevertheless decided I could not place my friends in an embarrassing situation should the catastrophe really happen.

Paris : Prelude to the World War

But all hope was not yet abandoned. Jaurès was still there. He did not despair. Bracke, in those days my most solicitous friend, advised me not to leave as long as there was still a spark of hope. On July 31 I was still in Paris. My employer advised me to depart immediately—a few hours before, telephone connections with Germany had been cut. Germany had already declared a state of “war readiness”. The tension was becoming unbearable. When I finally returned to my friends, last hopes seemed to dwindle. But still we waited for news from Jaurès. We waited. . . .

Shrilly and horribly the silence was torn : “Jaurès is assassinated !” Impossible that this could be true—that they would so soon begin to kill their own people, to destroy the best of them all ! It was so senseless, it could not be true. But then came the details of the abominable murder, removing every doubt. The old slander of the jingoes against the noblest friend of the people finally had armed the hand of one of them. The jingoes wanted war—therefore, the best friend of peace had first to be removed. Now even my dear friend Bracke urged me to make my decision.

One possibility of staying in France was offered to me by a very dear friend who was nearest to my heart during those happy Paris years. He was several years older than I, shared my interests, and had had a richer experience than I. A student of pharmacy, he was on the eve of completing his studies. Would I not marry him so that we would be able to stay together ? I would not have to run away. I hesitated. Under the circumstances, I was afraid that

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marriage would make me too dependent upon my friend, economically and otherwise. I knew myself well enough to realize that it might be too severe a strain upon my strong sense of independence and might destroy the harmony we had enjoyed until then.

I told my friend of the difficulties I envisaged. He argued very strongly against them but showed a touching understanding of my nature. Finally, in the interest of all, and against the will of my friends, I decided on departure.

All that was dear to me had to be abandoned. However, at that hour it was not the idea of personal loss that kept my mind in turmoil, but the realization that these idealistic young friends were to be sent to the bloody battlefields, that they would suffer and many of them perhaps never return, that they would face the shells and bombs which my compatriots would rain down upon them. Could there be a more cruel, a more useless fate !

III

FIGHTING FOR PEACE IN WARTIME GERMANY

"ALL connections with Germany are interrupted," I was told at the station.

"Already?" I asked in surprise.

"The Germans did it."

"Go to Belgium or to Switzerland," someone suggested. I decided on Switzerland, fortunately. Belgium had already been invaded by German troops, but we did not know that yet.

"This war cannot last very long," a French officer on the train, on his way to fortified Belfort, told me. "It will be a war of technique and material, and we will crush them."

I had to change trains several times. Mobilization was already in full swing. It was heartrending to see families with many children, fleeing the country where they had lived happily. The husband would on the morrow be a German soldier, fighting against people who had been his friends.

I went to Basel to be near the German frontier. All border traffic was interrupted. Naturally I had no passport. No woman had one before the war. I tried to cross the border by walking. Impossible.

"Show me that you are a German," was the roughly spoken demand.

"I have only my language to prove it."

The officer was not interested.

"We don't need women. The men who have to go to the front come first on the trains!"

The same experience was repeated at the German consulate. I went to see relatives, a Swiss family. The boy was preparing to join the army. I spent all day in that Swiss town. A second day passed similarly. Feeling in German Switzerland was running highly pro-German. I had to be careful to utter no critical word, and the tension proved too strong for me to be able to stay there.

The fourth of August brought a terrible blow. The German Socialists had voted the war credits! Everything seemed to collapse. "How could they?" I argued with myself. "Couldn't they see the Austrian responsibility, beginning with the provocative ultimatum to Serbia? Without approval of the German government Vienna would never have dared to go as far as it did."

More days of waiting followed. My parents, not knowing where I was, must be in great distress. I sent them telegrams and letters but doubted if these would reach them. (They did not. Weeks later they all arrived together, long after I had appeared.)

Three weeks in Switzerland and I became uncontrollably impatient. I looked up the consul and told him, "I am ready to stay here as long as it pleases you, but you will have to pay my expenses. Soon I shall have no more money." That seemed to impress

him. After some more negotiations I received a paper authorizing me to walk over the border.

In Leopoldshöhe, the first German town, I climbed into a freight car crowded with German troops on their way to the front. Most of them were married men and not too enthusiastic about fighting. For hours the car did not move. It was a hot August day ; our car was in the sun, and the air became hotter and fouler. There was no water, except that which the soldiers had brought in their bottles. They shared it with me.

What a trip ! There were only military trains, freight cars, and I never knew whether I had boarded the right train. I had to rely on my knowledge of the district, jumping off at the next stop when I saw the train head away from my route. For two days and nights I lived on the meals the soldiers gave me. There was no sleep, no fresh air.

My parents were surprised and still more relieved when I suddenly stood before them.

"The war cannot last very long," I thought of the words the French officer had spoken to me. "I shall stay here with you until it is over, and then, if possible, go back to France."

Our doctor, learning of my arrival, came to ask me to help in the military hospital, where he was surgeon-major. I should receive quick training and should prove myself useful, he said.

"Heal the wounds of the war ?" I said to myself. "Perhaps that is what we should do," I agreed. They took me to an operating-room. I had to assist there, and to record the details of wounds and treatment.

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Wounded soldiers arrived daily. Most of them were youngsters. They told of their war experience without realizing the cruelty of their language. In the first weeks a young man, apparently not badly wounded, was brought into the operating-room, his mouth gaping open.

"He cannot close it," said the orderly.

The young soldier's eyes looked terribly frightened. After he had left the room, one of the doctors said: "Tetanus, and we have no anti-tetanus serum here yet. I shall wire for it. Let us hope it will not be too late." He did everything he could. The young soldier was isolated and well taken care of—but the serum came too late. It was our first death.

Most of the wounded, it was plain, were mighty glad to be out of the trenches and not eager for their wounds to heal too quickly. *Heimatschuss*—homeland shot—they used to call a more serious wound that kept them for a long period in the hospital far behind the front. But most of them were sent back to the trenches, in spite of all their efforts to stay away. And I had to help send them out again! Soon I saw through our illusion about "healing wounds". No, our function actually was not to heal wounds, but to make men fit to be sent into battle again—perhaps to death. I felt I could not go on with this work, helping to cure men only to have them sent out anew as cannon fodder.

The central office of the metal concern for which I had worked in Paris had learned of my return to Germany and had asked me to come to Frankfurt. They needed my services. At their first request I was hesitant—but after I had made up my mind about

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the experience in the military hospital, I answered the summons.

The heads of the firm knew of my Socialist convictions. I thought it my duty to tell them also of my attitude toward the war. I therefore never felt uncomfortable in my relationships in business, for these were always based on frankness and honesty, and my employers reciprocated in kind.

"Do you think you have any talent for organizing?" N.S., one of my employers, asked me one day. "We should like to have you organize a new department of special importance just now."

I replied that I thought I could handle the assignment. I outlined my ideas on procedure, and they were approved. It was a delicate task. From 1914 to 1918 almost all economic life, particularly that of a metal concern, was concentrated on war purposes. The new department I was entrusted with dealt with the most confidential records of manufacturing and financial transactions. Its scope included relations with the war ministry and the building of new plants for war purposes. The department also supervised the operation of plants already owned by the company. Besides my departmental work, I had to attend to much of the foreign-language correspondence. One of my employers discovered that I had a gift for understanding legal matters, a discovery that led to additional duties for me.

Nobody working for a living during the World War could escape some work connected with production of war materials. My position, however, was somewhat more difficult than that of a factory worker, because it gave me knowledge of many secrets that

would have interested the anti-war movement. What was to be my attitude? Was it to be a double allegiance, one to the anti-war movement and another to the firm? Should I "bore from within" for the sake of my cause? "No," I reasoned. "I must answer confidence with confidence. If they trust me in the firm, I must show them that I deserve it. I cannot serve my cause by deceit. Objectionable means cannot further a great idea." Once this viewpoint was clear, I resisted every temptation to use for the sake of my anti-war activities any knowledge obtained in the execution of my business duty.

Although my first reaction to the voting of the war credits by the German Socialists was a determination to give up my membership in the party, I dropped this idea of isolation when I returned to Frankfurt. Someone in Biebrich had already told me of an opposition within the Social Democratic party and had given me the name of one of its leaders, Robert Dissmann, of the Socialist provincial organization.

Robert was one of the most interesting figures in the German labour movement and a person whom I came to respect as a leader and to hold in affection as a man. Of a lower middle-class family in the Lower Rhine district, he had had only the education of a three-class village school. In his teens, however, he had become an official of the Metal Workers Union in his home district, and a successful and popular one. He was the most indefatigable worker I have ever known. When you saw a man with a long, downward hanging, blond moustache, his extra-large briefcase stuffed with documents and books, rushing through the streets with his clothes hanging loosely

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about him, it was Robert on the job. With a gay, cheerful temperament and an excellent sense of humour, nature surely had destined him for an easier, more joyous life than circumstances now permitted him to lead. He had devoted his entire life to the idea of the liberation of labour and was ready to sacrifice all personal advantages for this goal. There was no man more devoted to the cause. But the same sacrifices he asked from himself, he insisted every other member of the party should be willing to make. You had to give your night's sleep, risk your job, your liberty, your life, just as he did, without expecting any special praise. It was your duty—that was all. Since he set himself such a code of pure devotion, none of his closer friends dared to refuse his demands for service. His demands were pitiless and so inexorable that they sometimes ruined our health—but no one could reproach him. He certainly was one of the best organizers the German labour movement has known. What a pity that he is missing now when the most difficult organizing job of all times is before us—that of organizing the underground movement in Germany. Of what inestimable service his rich imagination and special talent, combined with his unselfishness, could be now !

When I met Robert Dissmann in his office, he had just come from a meeting with Rosa Luxemburg, shortly before she was jailed. He was in a cheerful mood, encouraged by good news that Rosa had brought. I told him that I was looking for Socialists who had not yet forgotten the spirit of the great anti-war demonstrations in the last days of July.

“ You have come to the right place. We are gather-

ing together all those who think as you do. Do you know that not all Socialist members of the Reichstag were in favour of voting the war credits? Fourteen were opposed to them, and among these fourteen was Hugo Haase, the president of the group and of the party. He was forced, in the Reichstag, to read the declaration justifying the majority's attitude, but he had previously fought the majority with all his vigour. Opposition to the majority's attitude is flaring up all over the country. We must stick together and spread our ideas in spite of the state of siege. Are you ready to be at our disposal as one of our speakers?"

He expressed so much optimism that I could not resist. In the first party meeting that followed, the member of the Reichstag for Frankfurt, Dr. M. Quarck, defended the majority's vote for the war credits, emphasizing especially the czarist danger. I was the first speaker in the discussion period. I stressed the imperialist ambitions of the Pan-Germans and of the Kaiser, arguing the absurdity of the spectacle of the Kaiser, at the head of the war and government forces, fighting against the imperialism of other nations. Although the majority was in Dr. Quarck's favour, the unknown young woman was well received by the audience—a reaction which made the doctor so nervous that he permitted himself some disparaging personal remarks.

"Who is this young person who comes to give us lessons on imperialism? I have never seen her working here in our movement," he said.

The audience protested. One man stood up to declare: "I know Toni Sender. I don't agree with her, but still must give testimony for her, for I saw her

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work very hard for the movement in Paris." It was a member of the German Club in Paris who also had escaped in time. This remark settled things in my favour. They could no longer suspect me.

But the result was that party meetings became rarer. Practices within the party convinced me that even in the German labour movement the genuine spirit of democracy was still unknown—it was understood only as the right of the majority to carry through its decision. Minority rights were disregarded. Was it not a legitimate demand to have a speaker of the minority or the Reichstag group defend opposition to the war credits? It was never granted. Every party meeting became a more disagreeable experience. As our influence seemed to increase, opportunities for discussion were more and more curtailed. Finally it became altogether impossible to explain to the members the viewpoint of the opponents of the war. But we would not let the opposition be entirely suppressed. Robert found a way out.

"Toni, you must help us," he said one day. "We shall organize a local branch of the National Federation of Proletarian Freethinkers. This organization has no branch here. Its national leadership is opposed to war and would not mind our using the organization's protecting roof for our anti-war activity. I have a long list of names of possible members. Will you look them up in the evenings and try to bring them in? But you must be very careful not to let them know our real purpose before you find out how they stand on the war. I must leave it to your discretion to bring in the right kind of people."

What could I do but accept the task? It was a good

exercise in political strategy. Some of my listeners took the objects of the freethinkers quite seriously and started to discuss with me related philosophical problems. Others understood rapidly, could read between the lines. Many promised to come to our first meeting, and they did come. The jobs assigned to me for this assembly were a speech on the separation of state and church in France and an explanation of the aims and statutes of the Proletarian Freethinkers. Of the latter I did not know much more than most in the audience. The necessary documents had not arrived on time. Even to the present day I do not understand why the workers must have a freethinkers' organization of their own. Nevertheless, I must have answered the many pointed questions satisfactorily, for after ample discussion the decision to found the group won almost unanimous approval.

From this start until the founding of the Independent Socialist party at Easter, 1917, the freethinkers' group was the rallying-place of the opponents of war. It was not always easy to meet. Many persons active in our group were well-known political leaders, and very soon the police began to take an interest in us. Furious defenders of the war denounced our real purpose to the owners of assembly halls, and it became ever more difficult to obtain a meeting-place. Many times, when a meeting with a speaker from Berlin had been arranged, I would be told, when I came to the hall, that the place could not be put at our disposal. It was useless to argue with the inn-keeper. The only thing to do was to look for another place. Yet, despite every obstacle, we succeeded in holding all our scheduled meetings.

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The military authorities also began to become curious about our activity. As our ranks increased, denunciations to the authorities began. One after another the men, until then assigned to important war work at home, were suddenly called to the trenches. They knew they risked their lives in joining us. Nobody who came to the Proletarian Freethinkers in the first war years and to the Independent Socialist party after 1917 expected any personal advantage from these affiliations—exactly the contrary: only danger, if not worse. Only reliable, unselfish, and idealistic men and women joined us. They created in these organizations a spirit of comradeship such as I have never met again. An intimate tie for life was created. I am convinced that none of these people who survived the war and are living now in the Hitler hell, has given up. They are characters of steel—the best of the Germans.

From the beginning of my anti-war activity I tried to remain in contact with comrades abroad. Especially those in France proved to be genuine friends. We discussed the burning issues in letters, some of them written in the French trenches and sent via neutral countries. Though we could not entirely agree in our conceptions, I rediscovered the old willingness to understand and to appreciate the other's point of view.

Anti-war activity receives its final justification only when it is international. I learned of attempts to come to such an international understanding. Women were the first to undertake the daring enterprise. Under the influence of Rosa Luxemburg and with the assiduous help of Clara Zetkin, the great Socialist woman leader, with both of whom I kept in touch, the

first International Anti-War conference was organized in Berne in the spring of 1915. Before going to the conference Robert Dissmann and I went to see Clara Zetkin at her home in Wilhelmshöhe, on the hills near Stuttgart. We were told to be careful because Clara's house was being watched. We saw no one about. Clara, who was living with her second husband, the painter H. Zundel, in a pretty little house set in the middle of a garden, was at that time still editor of the Socialist women's newspaper, *Die Gleichheit* (Equality), and in close contact with Rosa Luxemburg. She was one of the most active fighters against war and very bitter towards anyone who did not fully agree with her views. We discussed measures to be taken to organize the opposition in southwestern Germany, the agenda of the Berne conference, and, finally, how to spread the decisions of this gathering, should it succeed. Clara again and again became excited when the talk turned to persons whom she considered traitors, and these included not only those who had voted the war credits but also the opponents of war who were not sufficiently irreconcilable. Robert, fortunately, in his gentle way succeeded in quieting her, and we came away well satisfied.

But in Berne we met unexpected difficulties. We were certainly pleased to have not only German but also French and English women delegates meet for a common purpose while the cannon thundered on all fronts. Women were the first to demonstrate that the spirit of internationalism could not be killed entirely. The French delegate, Louise Saumoneau, was not sent by her party but joined us on her own responsibility. It was her courageous campaign

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against the war which later caused her country to jail her for a long period.

I had a long discussion with the two official British delegates, Margaret Bondfield (in later years the Minister of Labour in the MacDonald cabinet) and Marion Philipps, the very intelligent leader of the women's trade union movement in Great Britain. They insisted that Britain had gone to war in order to defend little Belgium, whose neutrality had been violated by the Germans. Although I had protested most vigorously against this violation, I doubted the generosity of a British government which had tolerated so many injustices in the world and which, itself, had committed some of them. It seemed to me more probable that Britain had entered the war for the sake of her own interests. Since then, developments have, unfortunately, proved me right.

Nikolai Lenin, pulling wires behind the scenes, created some difficulties at Berne. The majority group in the conference demanded international action of the women in all countries to put an immediate end to the war and to reach a peace without annexations or conquest. This was the main issue on which we had gathered. But the Russian women, directed by Lenin from another room of the Berne Volkshaus, introduced a completely different resolution. It called for immediate splits in our respective parties—definite breaks with the majority Socialists, who supported the war. All of us were opposed to forcing splits. Clara Zetkin, then in precarious health, was terribly upset. Many of us feared for her life. And she, as well as other delegates who knew him, were far from pleased when Karl Radek, present as an aid to Lenin, would

come and sit with us. We knew him too well as a despicable character to want him as a member. Lenin's obstructionism was finally defeated. We did not wish to separate ourselves from the masses by order of Lenin, for it was among these masses that our agitation for peace must be conducted. It was not until 1920 that Lenin succeeded in his programme, this time with Clara at his side.

But the first international meeting after the outbreak of the war, arranged by women, ended in harmony. It was to be the springboard of the struggle for peace.

Heading homeward, I again came to Leopoldshöhe, the first German town across the Swiss border. I opened my suitcase for the customs officer, took out my toilet bag, and gave it to him without any nervousness.

"These are my toilet articles and the rest are dresses and underwear. That is all I have."

Amiably the officer returned the bag. He glanced at my luggage.

"Everything is all right. Good-bye." Of course the officer had no idea that he had held an ominous manuscript in his hands.

The manifesto of the Berne conference was safe! Now it could be printed and spread. Robert Dissmann would do what was necessary. An old friend in Baden had his printing plant ready. My task was to organize the distribution. That would not be too difficult. Preparatory work had already been done. Before my trip to Switzerland I had started to organize the working women opposed to war. Elizabeth S., a proletarian, an upright and courageous person, was

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my best helper. We met every fortnight. I gave a short report of the news that the authorities did not see fit to print. Most of these women were the wives of soldiers. Their loved ones were in the trenches. At home they endured near famine. Some of them were working in munitions factories. They had become emancipated and independent. Within a short period life had taught them what nobody had explained to them before. They were brave and courageous. Soon after my return to Frankfurt we met. We were proud that women had organized the Berne conference. Elizabeth began to complete the plan for distribution of the leaflet—for which the military authorities were already looking.

“Listen, this is how we shall handle it,” said Elizabeth. “Everyone among us has her assigned district. We shall wear long capes, as many of us as have them, to conceal the leaflets. If you haven’t one, Toni, I can lend you one. The work is to be started each day after sunset. Inconspicuously, we must see to it that the leaflets find their way into the homes. Everyone must use her own brains. Our pride must be not in being arrested, but in doing the job successfully.”

The plan was followed. On the appointed evening the distribution went forward over the entire city. None of us was caught or arrested that night. But the next day people began to talk about the sudden appearance of anti-war propaganda. The police were forced into activity. Two of our women were seized. I was not yet suspected. Nothing could be proved, and our two friends were released. The work was resumed.

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leaflet, when I received word from the customs office. A package had arrived for me from Switzerland. I was to come to the office to pay the necessary duty. What might it be? I did not expect anything from abroad. Two large packages were brought before me in the customs office. I had a presentiment as to the contents—prohibited literature. The officer unwrapped the parcels and out came dozens of books. My heart was beating wildly. Fortunately that could not be detected by the officer. I was relieved when I saw on the paper cover the title *Das perfide Albion*, the slogan used against England by the German jingoes during the war. Rapidly the officer looked through the book.

"Seems to be good patriotic stuff," he said.

"Certainly, officer," was my answer.

Had he been a little more careful, however, he would have discovered under the paper cover the real title, *J'accuse*, the famous book written by a German and accusing Germany, on the basis of authentic documents, of her share of the war guilt. Had the officer discovered this title, my immediate arrest would have resulted. Sascha and Wally Grumbach had had these packages forwarded to me. I was to send the book to a number of highly interested and influential persons in Germany. This explanation came later in a letter, not directly addressed to me. This time again the experiment was successful, but the frivolous Grumbachs repeated it twice and finally brought me into serious danger, from which I escaped mainly on account of my young, innocent appearance.

Gradually more and more of our male comrades became known to the military authorities, and one

after another was sent into the army. It was a terrible blow when Robert Dissmann's turn came. He was the soul of the movement, its active spirit in all southwestern Germany. The most resourceful in new ideas and methods, he also had the contacts with the Berlin leaders. He was our most inspiring fighter. We were almost desperate.

"Don't lose courage, children," he said in his Rhenish dialect. "I shall not go to the trenches. I am sick. I shall remain your adviser as much as possible. Don't lose courage, I shall manage to come back. Meantime, Toni has to do my job. Try to keep in touch with me."

He kept his promise. Soon he was in a military hospital. I had to procure him medical advice. The army authorities did not trust him and sent him to a distant, isolated place which could be reached from the nearest railroad station only by a two-hour walk across a mountain. I had given him a promise—to visit him, if possible, every week. And I did it in all kinds of weather. I would stay the night in a peasant's house in the village. Early in the morning I started on my lonely hike, climbing the mountain through a dense forest. Arriving at length at the army hospital, I would look at Robert's window for a signal that the coast was clear—a white towel hung out as a flag. If it was there, I could enter. If not, there was danger and I had to wait, sometimes in the open, sometimes in the soldiers' canteen. More than once I had to travel back late in the evening without having seen him, crossing the mountain in the dark night. The entire effort had been in vain. I could not enter the hospital.

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If access was possible, I gave a short, whispered report. Other soldiers were in the same room. In not much more than an hour, all affairs had to be discussed, plans for the next period made. Robert never lost his good humour, his vivacity, and his confidence that he would get out of the army. But what trials he had to go through ! His last place of confinement was a mental asylum, where I could visit him only after obtaining a number of permits from military authorities and where he played his part so perfectly that I was deeply worried lest this time he was really affected.

During the entire period of Robert's absence the work of the organization for that part of Germany was in my hands. The better to co-ordinate our activity, we had carefully prepared a conference for the whole region—the Rhineland, the Lower Rhine, Baden, Württemberg. Everything seemed to be very well arranged. We thought ourselves unusually shrewd in selecting a meeting-place in the neighbourhood of police headquarters in Frankfurt. Some prominent political representatives from Berlin took part. It was a sunny Sunday morning. Our guests had all arrived. Everything seemed to go smoothly. There was no interference by the police, and that made us confident. One of our friends, Dr. Notter, had prepared a speech on swamp-draining. That was the declared purpose of our meeting, to discuss measures for increasing the agricultural production of blockaded Germany.

I had just taken the addresses of all our guests and those of some valuable contacts they recommended, when suddenly the door opened and the chief of Frankfurt's political police entered with a dozen

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plain-clothes men. I was sitting at the chairman's table and fortunately recognized the intruders immediately. Within a moment the list of names had vanished. The police approached our table.

"What is the purpose of this meeting? Why have you not notified the police, as was your duty?" Dr. Neubert, the chief, demanded.

"We are discussing swamp-draining as a necessary national measure," I replied.

Dr. Neubert looked at Dr. Notter, who showed him his manuscript, then at me.

"You interested in swamp-draining, Miss Sender? That does not convince me. We shall have to take the names and addresses of all persons present."

Immediately this was done, with the result that five or six of our visitors, well-known persons in Germany, were arrested and brought to the police station. The meeting was broken up.

Those of us who had escaped met in the street. What now?

"One of us must attend to the job of having our prisoners freed. The rest must carry through the conference," I said.

"But how can we do that? Nobody will give us a meeting-place."

"Nature will give it to us," I retorted. "All our friends must be informed of the exact place in the near-by forest, a somewhat remote spot. We shall post our guards around to warn us in case anything suspicious is noticed."

This plan was carried through. Again we met, this time in the evening and better on our guard. Standing, we discussed and settled all our business undis-

turbed. In small groups we returned to the city. The next day all our prisoners were released. Nothing could be proved against them. The person who had denounced us to the police could not have known very much.

Immediately after this incident I received another warning. A friend of mine in Berlin, Toni G., regularly sent me all available material on the opposition to the war, especially that of the Spartakus group, a radical movement sponsored by Rosa Luxemburg. Through friends I received a letter from Berlin saying that Toni was arrested and in jail. Why? Without my knowledge my mail had been censored, and the authorities had discovered that Toni was dispatching the clandestine material. The letters I received did not show any traces of having been opened. But still I felt a terrible responsibility. Toni was a very delicate person. How would she be able to endure months of jail?

I decided to go at once to Berlin to look up Hugo Haase, the party chairman, with whom I had been corresponding for some time. Haase was a famous lawyer and I asked him to take Toni's case and to try to get her free as soon as possible. He declared himself ready to do everything possible, not as a lawyer for money's sake but as a comrade. While I was in Berlin, he saw her and arranged that she receive some reading material. But it was several months before she was freed.

Meanwhile all my friends were informed that my address was no longer safe. We went on corresponding, of course, but through other addresses.

As the military situation became worse, the German

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authorities became more nervous. A number of our friends were arrested, among them the chairman of our Proletarian Freethinkers. Everyone was surprised that I was still free, most of all myself. I was, however, not mistaken about the deep interest the police and the courts were taking in me. A number of times the police searched my home. The last time they came with twelve men. But all searches were in vain. Since the incident with Toni G., I was prepared to receive them at any moment. Everything was in order at home—no letters, no copies, no literature. Only those who have experienced it can know what it means to carry on work and correspondence with an empty desk. Everything written had to be hidden in safe places outside my home, in spots not easily reached. The greatest difficulty was presented by the lists of addresses I had to keep. It was one of my tasks every Monday night to forward the *Mitteilungsblatt*, edited in Berlin, to all our groups in south-western Germany. This weekly was published by the Berlin Socialists who opposed the war, and it carried valuable information not otherwise available. How many nights we worked straight through to get all the material out of the house !

I worked day and night without any signs of fatigue. I gave my employers no cause for accusing me of any negligence. I would have hated to disappoint them, so I conscientiously fulfilled my duties. I could not expect my employers to share my convictions, but often we had interesting political discussions, especially during the peace negotiations between Germany and Russia at Brest-Litovsk. Naturally they were convinced capitalists, but open-minded and critical.

When I received my first summons to court, I was prepared to go to jail. However, what they asked of me was testimony against friends, opponents of the war in other cities. After the second experience of the kind, however, there was no doubt in my mind that the object was to make me incriminate myself. I was not quite so naïve as they would have liked me to be. Though I had to testify without a lawyer's assistance and the summons never told me in advance what case I was to give testimony on, I avoided incriminating either friends or myself. Sometimes I managed by feigning a rather poor memory. Naturally I was never told what the other witnesses or the defendant himself had already admitted and what, therefore, could not be denied. In some cases I succeeded in informing the defendants of my testimony by having them brought from jail to a doctor or dentist and met there by a common friend. One finally acquires a routine also in clandestine work, especially when one's conscience is clear in the conviction that all one is doing is destined to serve the best interests of the people. When democracy is non-existent and the authorities rule by a state of siege, clandestine methods are forced upon those who refuse to cease thinking.

The German ruling classes' war aims meantime had become clearer than ever. They included the desire to annex the valleys of Briey and Longwy in France, to keep the major part of Belgium, to make the Baltic states German vassals, and to annex part of Russo-Polish territory.

I was in contact with Hugo Haase, Eduard Bernstein, the father of Socialist revisionism but a vigorous

opponent of the war, and Karl Kautsky, the great Marxian scientist, and I kept them informed of the feeling of the anti-war groups in south-western Germany. Kautsky, by the end of 1915, had declared in the magazine *Neue Zeit* that the minority within the Socialist parliamentary group could no longer be mute but had to vote openly against the next motion for war credits. The result was that on March 24, 1916, twenty Socialist members of the Reichstag voted against the credits. Haase, as the speaker of this minority, justified this attitude. We all agreed with this step, although it broke the unity of the Social Democratic group in the Reichstag. Was not the parliamentary platform the only place in the country where something like free speech was possible? But intolerance ruled the hour. The twenty members were expelled from the Socialist parliamentary group, and they formed a separate bloc.

The intolerance of the Majority Socialists was reflected also in the party meetings in Frankfurt and elsewhere. We were deprived, by the action of the majority group, of any opportunity for free discussion.

The majority had decided to have their leader, Philipp Scheidemann, come to Frankfurt to defend their viewpoint. Thereupon we had invited the Reichstag deputy Ewald Vogtherr, one of the twenty anti-war men. When the meeting opened, we proposed to grant Vogtherr the same time as Scheidemann. The motion was put to the meeting and the vote convinced us that we had a majority. But the chairman refused to count the votes and declared the majority in favour of hearing only Scheidemann. At that time the bulk of the opposition to the war

was formed by women, trained in my women's group. They were furious at the ruling of the chair and protested vigorously against this dictatorial procedure. The meeting showed signs of disorder. Then occurred what I, naïvely, had never thought possible. A score of men resorted to physical violence to put all the protesting women outside the door! When they came to me I challenged them: "Do you dare to put your hands on me?" They did not touch me, but of course I would not remain in a group that had trampled upon all democratic rights.

However, I kept a cool head. I called our members together and told them: "This experience has proved that the supporters of the war credits are afraid that we, the opponents, could become the majority in the party—therefore their provocation to make us leave the organization. Yet we want the unity of the labour movement. Don't let us be fooled. We are confident that our convictions are right and in the end must be victorious."

It required a high amount of self-control to follow that route. It was more and more evident that the Majority Socialists wanted to split the party. In the party papers on which the executive had any influence, anti-war editors were dismissed. And when in January, 1917, the Socialist opponents of the war called a conference in Berlin, the delegates and their supporters in the country were expelled from the party without any opportunity of defence. I still consider it an honour to have belonged to those who were informed by the executive that they should consider themselves outside the party.

Now that all our sacrifices for the unity of the

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labour movement had been in vain, I urged Haase, Kautsky, and Bernstein to act immediately. It was plainly our duty to voice the will for peace of the starving millions. I knew their situation, for I myself had known hunger. Of course, I had a good income and could have afforded to pay any price for "boot-leg" foodstuff. But I would not buy any of it. I would have felt ashamed to go to the meetings of the hungry workers and, well-fed, sit among them and discuss their problems and their sufferings.

Many workers declared their solidarity with their expelled leaders. A new political organization had to be created. The leaders in Berlin had inevitably to recognize this. They finally did. At Easter, 1917, a convention was called in the venerable medieval city of Gotha in Thüringen, for which old Wilhelm Bock, a highly respected leader of the Leather Workers Union, was a member of the Reichstag. Wilhelm had known at first hand Bismarck's law against socialism and was a tested fighter. Once when we had him as a speaker he told of his activity under Bismarck's law and of the way he had many times fooled the police. He gave some useful hints for our anti-war work.

Bock had succeeded in organizing the convention which, in spite of the state of siege, was to become the founding congress of the Independent Social Democratic party of Germany (Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands). The best minds of the German labour movement were with us. Besides Haase, Kautsky, Bernstein, and Bock, there was Kurt Eisner, the poet, the kindest and at the same time the most courageous of men, who went to jail for his anti-war conviction. Clara Zetkin, of course,

belonged to us and also Georg Ledebour, a Berlin member of the Reichstag and a fine example of the old type of labour fighter. With a sharp face and a slender body, Ledebour had a lame leg, which, however, did not prevent him from climbing mountains. So fond was he of hiking that, whenever he came to Frankfurt during a week-end for a lecture, he would ask me to come with him to the Taunus Mountains. Not infrequently in the midst of our excursion he would start a dispute over some political questions on which we could not agree. He was pugnacious and stubborn. It certainly was not always easy for Haase, our leader, to get along with Georg in the national executive. But we all liked old Georg for his fine qualities as a fighter and comrade. He was one of the few persons who expressed themselves strongly in favour of a republic from the platform of the Reichstag.

The Gotha convention was not without controversial incidents. The delegates of the Spartakus group, which was later to form the Communist party, joined our newly formed Independent Social Democratic party with mental reservations. We all felt somewhat uncomfortable about it. But this was the only evidence of disharmony. Otherwise it was a gathering with a fine spirit of companionship and solidarity.

Of course we expected at every moment that the authorities would dissolve our gathering, but we were happy to have found a political home again. In the midst of our solemn deliberations there were some humorous moments. One night, when I had returned to my hotel, I suddenly heard men's voices singing

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operatic arias under my window. It was a group of old comrades, led by Alfred Henke, member of the Reichstag from Bremen, serenading me from the old Gotha market-place. The moon smiled at the odd group of old fellows. It was a rare sight in those days of manslaughter, starvation, and sorrow.

Conditions of life became even harder after the convention. The worst winter, that of 1917, when almost all food consisted in whole or in part of turnips, was before us. Bread made of flour mixed with turnips, turnips at luncheon and dinner, marmalade made of turnips—the air was filled with the smell of turnips and it almost made you vomit! We hated turnips and had to eat them. They were the only foodstuff obtainable in abundance.

I soon realized that a great change in the mentality of the people was taking place. They had lost their confidence in Ludendorff and Hindenburg, in the whole General Staff. At the beginning of the war my colleagues in the metal firm kept aloof from me, since it was known that I was against the war, but with each passing year a greater number became friendly. Finally many of them came to me to discuss the political situation. They had begun to feel that things were going wrong in the German ruling circles.

If some democratic freedom had existed during these months, our newly formed party certainly would have attracted a huge following. That was what made the authorities prohibit any public activity on our part. However, a way out was found. I was charged to follow the lecture tours of speakers of other parties, who, supporting the war, were free to address public meetings. My task was to ask for the floor in the

discussion period. The knack consisted first in getting the floor by making the audience curious and then in speaking in terms that made it difficult for the army officer, always present, to stop and arrest me. Old Georg Ulrich, known as the "Red Duke from Hessen" because he had become a member of the Reichstag for the Grand Duchy of Hessen, was one of the most popular figures in his state. He was the speaker I had to follow most of the time. He became nervous when I appeared. My speaking time was curtailed. They would not give me more than ten minutes. But towards the last year of the war I could feel the increasing curiosity of the audiences, and at the end of my ten minutes I could ask the audience myself if they wanted to hear more. I had some more interesting news for them, I would say.

"Let her speak longer," was the demand of the audience.

The officers took down every word in shorthand, and I was prepared for arrest at any moment, although I tried to word my talks in such a way that they would not be incriminating. All my friends were amazed that I was still free. Only later was I to have an explanation of this amazing fact.

One day I had to go to Rüsselsheim, to speak during the discussion period at a meeting of the women workers of the Opel automobile factory, then producing only munitions. After I had delivered my talk, the entire audience remained when the meeting was over and asked me to open a new meeting. I complied, although of course I had no permit from the army high command. One of our most active nuclei was started in this industrial town.

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"End the war!" This was our main demand. But it was a negative demand, and it was not sufficient to satisfy those of us who looked into the future. To fight those forces that make for war, those who pressed for the imperialist policies of Pan-Germanism—that was our purpose. Those forces, which had their foothold in heavy industry and among the barons of the big, vast Prussian estates, were the same that prevented Germany from becoming a free democratic country where the people had not only the right to "die for their fatherland" but to make it a nation with a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

When Haase came to Frankfurt to address a secret meeting, we conferred on this problem through an entire night. Here for the first time I had an opportunity to realize that this excellent lawyer and political leader also had a great constructive mind. Neither of us doubted that the necessary great change in Germany could not happen without a revolution. It was a major necessity that such a revolution should not find us unprepared.

"We cannot expect to take power away from the war-makers for any length of time without touching the economic foundation of their political power," I told Haase.

"We are aware of that," he retorted. "I have contacts with many leading persons in economic life"—and he gave a number of names which I cannot now repeat without denouncing them to Nazi vengeance. "They are ready to collaborate in the event of such a fundamental change. In contrast with Russia, we in Germany cannot afford any interrup-

tion, any stoppage, of the economic machinery, for this would risk having our people starve and finally revolt against the revolution itself. We need the utmost possible continuity of the industrial process. With the majority of the people behind us ready to build a new, free world, without political and economic slavery, we may succeed in making Germany a real homeland of the working people. We must rebuild the state from top to bottom. Meantime, we have to prepare for the moment. We must be ready when the great changes become possible."

IV

THE EVE OF REVOLT

THE German people's capacity for suffering must certainly be above the average. They proved it during the war years of starvation and sacrifice. But this, too, reached its limit. Through my intimate contacts with the women of the working classes I knew what an impossible task was placed on their shoulders. Bread tickets were always insufficient for the many hungry mouths. Tickets were issued for meat you often could not get or had not the money to buy. Butter and fat tickets did not mean you could obtain the quantity indicated on them. More often than not the word "butter" on the ticket was all one saw of butter. I usually gave some of my bread tickets to families with many children. Faces grew paler, influenza took many victims. How could weak bodies resist?

Many of my women friends worked in the munitions factories while their husbands were in the trenches. Their wages were needed to keep their households going. On Sundays they went with their knapsacks into the country in the hope of obtaining some food from the farmers. On their way home they had to take care to avoid the police, who would have taken the food from them. Bootlegging of food-

stuff was, of course, prohibited. These mothers, who had to carry a heavy economic burden in addition to their daily fears for soldier husbands, were my most courageous aides in the fight for peace and for a better society. Not only did they feel most keenly the social injustices—it was not unknown to them that butter, meat, and other foods were being brought into the houses of the wealthy, who could afford to pay any price for them—but they realized that the army high command had withheld the truth about the military situation and the progress of the war.

The war was lost—and still the fighting went on. Tens of thousands more were being killed. What for? Had not the Russians shown an example to be followed?

Robert Dissmann, released from the army, or rather the hospital, as “incurable”, had resumed his intense activity. It was due to his zeal that the majority of the men left in the factories, especially in the metal industry, were behind us. In every important plant we had our trusted contacts—in one day we could reach them all.

The last remnant of confidence in the rulers of the nation collapsed when, in September, 1918, after the failure of the army offensive, the defection of Bulgaria threatened Germany with the probable loss of Rumania. How could the war go on without Rumanian oil and foodstuffs? The tide of military fortune had turned against Germany, and this could no longer be concealed from the people.

Now, when all was lost, those responsible took measures which might have had some value four years earlier. The government was reconstituted on a

broader basis. Instead of the Kaiser's nominating the ministers, the parties sent their delegates into the cabinet, which was headed by the liberal Prince Max von Baden. It was fear which forced Ludendorff and the General Staff to grant more rights to the people. Until the military defeat, our people had been given no chance to look behind the veil of the victory reports or to discuss public affairs in any critical way. Nobody knew it better than we. Only one public meeting had been permitted us—and that was after the collapse at the front and the threatened separation of Austria from Germany.

Impelled by General Ludendorff, the new government of Prince Max von Baden had to ask the Allies for an armistice. He addressed his request to President Wilson. The President doubted if the constitutional changes were really fundamental, since the Kaiser was still at the head of the nation and the generals continued in influential positions. Distrust of Germany had not yet vanished.

The national executive of the Independent Socialist Party in October, 1918, published an appeal saying : "Profound transformations are taking place in many nations—the world will have a completely new face. It is the historic task of international labour to play a leading part in this process of transformation. A spirit of sacrifice and unity is absolutely necessary."

And very soon this spirit of sacrifice was shown by men who certainly had not received the maximum of political training but in whom rebellion had been awakened. When, on October 30, the German high seas fleet received orders to sail for the purpose of making a great raid, ostensibly on England, the

crews of the *Helgoland* and the *Thüringen* refused to obey.

"The war is lost, over. Why this useless sacrifice? To satisfy the pride of our officers, from whom we have suffered enough during these four years? Never!" That was the sailors' reaction.

Immediately four hundred men of the *Thüringen* and two hundred of the *Helgoland* were arrested. It was too late, however, to intimidate the rest. Unafraid of threatened punishment, possibly death sentences, the sailors took things into their own hands, and by November 7 they had elected Sailors' Councils. The workers in the shipyards joined them, electing Workers' Councils. The sailors' demands were elementary and naïve, but the first was for peace and an end of the destructive influence of the Pan-Germans, the jingoes. These sailors, a majority of them from the working classes, had dared as early as 1917 to protest against treatment accorded by their officers, and two of them had paid for that with their lives. Since then they had formed secret associations and maintained some contact with Reichstag members of the Independent Socialist Party, Hugo Haase and Wilhelm Dittmann in particular.

Luise Zietz, a member of our national executive, also enjoyed their confidence. Those who have known Luise can understand that quite well. I had met her first during the war when I was a member of our party's advisory board. Luise came from a very poor family and even as a little girl was forced to work hard for a most meagre living. It was amazing what an iron energy this woman had developed from a childhood of such drudgery. She became a trade

union leader and, although she had received very little education, acquired a great amount of knowledge that enabled her to become the women's representative in the old Socialist party's executive and later one of the most industrious members of the Reichstag. She was the hardest-working person on the executive, refusing to recognize distinctions between women's tasks and general political duties. Her effectiveness as a popular speaker lay in her ability to understand the meaning of poverty, of which she had had such a full measure. At any hour of the day or night she was ready to help. The sailors who had revolted in 1917 against brutal treatment and bad food needed guidance. They had gone to Luise. What then seemed to be a lost cause became a year later, in November, 1918, the signal for the German revolution.

The flames started in the harbour city of Kiel. In the early November days revolutionaries, with the support of the workers, had taken possession of the city. Labour leaders had arrived. Would it be only a local uprising without national consequences? Not if the sailors' will was done! They understood that the fulfilment of their demands could be guaranteed only after a fundamental change in the entire nation. All those among the German people who understood the necessity for establishing a free and just social order sympathized with them. We felt the revolt coming nearer and wanted to lead it in such a direction that the German people would show the world that something new had really been begun. The world should be brought to trust us.

Robert Dissmann had gone to Berlin to discuss the situation with party leaders. On his return, early in

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the morning of Friday, November 8, I went to meet him at the station. We agreed there that the moment to act had come. We decided to call all our shop stewards together on the evening of the same day at the Schlesinger Eck, the meeting-place where we had finally achieved some feeling of security from denunciation by spies and police raids. The Schlesinger Eck was an old inn at the corner of Grand Gallus Street in the centre of the city. It had gone down in the hands of an innkeeper who seemed to be his own best customer. A dark staircase led to the upper floor, where we had our offices and meeting-room. It was not very clean and orderly, and we were not surprised if a mouse ran across our feet. But the innkeeper was a good-natured person, and so was his wife. They realized that they took chances in giving us asylum. Perhaps they sympathized with our work. After a long period of wandering from hall to hall, constantly ordered to move because of our anti-war attitude, we felt grateful for this shelter, although it was bare of any comfort. For the old Schlesinger Eck I retain a warm feeling of gratitude. There we were to have our memorable meeting during the night of this historic Friday.

Robert went to his office to have the invitations for the shop stewards printed and circulated the same morning ; I to my desk at the firm. It was impossible to concentrate on figures and business letters, on calculations and balance sheets. Great events were in the wind. I went to my employer.

“Please permit me to leave the office to-day.”

“What is the reason?”

“I can’t stay in the building. I must go into the

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city, try to meet soldiers and speak to the people in the street. Something must happen soon, and I feel it my duty not to keep aloof."

Although far from being revolutionary, my employers showed in those days a broad understanding. They, too, were probably prepared for stormy events and major changes. They let me go.

Nervousness seemed to be in the air. Or was it merely my own nervousness transferred to the world surrounding me? No, it could not be, for people to whom I talked in the streets were too responsive. Fifty-two months of exasperation finally had let loose a storm. They were furious above all at the realization that for more than four years they had not been told the truth, had been deceived about the situation on the battlefields and deliberately misled about events in the outside world. I had reached the main station when I saw a crowd. Sailors! They had come from Kiel. Their blue blouses seemed a symbol. I rushed to meet them. They told me what had happened in Kiel, in the navy.

"Delegations of sailors have been sent to all parts of the country to bring the message and to ask you to support us," they said.

I answered: "We are only too glad to do it. You can rely on us. My party, with all its heart, is with you."

"But can you tell me how the capital, how Berlin, stands? What about the government of Prince Max of Baden?" I asked.

"We don't know. Nothing seems to have happened there yet. However, they must and will come with us."

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On I went to the railway station, which was guarded by a special army detachment. Their commander had ordered a search of all trains from North Germany for possible insurgents. I tried to talk with the soldiers. One non-commissioned officer was the most responsive. His name was Stitz. Although he was still very young, he was thoughtful and courageous.

"We must end the searching of the trains for revolutionary soldiers," I told him. "Will you try to bring the soldiers at the station in line with the sailors and the revolution?"

Stitz agreed. That night two large red flags waved over the entrance of the Frankfurt central station.

Meanwhile, news reached us that Munich had proclaimed a republic. The Bavarian king had abdicated, and our Kurt Eisner, the poet and journalist, was the head of the new government. Peasants had joined with the Bavarian workers. That was encouraging news. We must hasten to join them.

Army officers mixed with the people. They had rarely done so before then. But their suddenly professed feeling for democracy came too late. The soldiers began to tear off their officers' shoulder straps. They would no longer recognize their former relationship, which consisted, on their part, of blind obedience. However, it was probably not so much this rigid discipline that the soldiers most deeply resented as the fact that the army officers considered themselves a superior caste with special social and economic privileges. Not only had they ruled during the war, but, together with the Junkers of the big estates of Prussia and the masters of heavy industry, the military caste had worked hand in glove with the

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court and ruled the nation. They were, therefore, considered directly responsible for the war, for the defeat and suffering. Considering the intensity of the people's misery, the mild treatment accorded the army officers was surprising. Only their shoulder straps were removed. No personal or physical harm was done any of them. In those midday hours of Friday we did not yet know what would happen in the barracks of the infantry. There was ferment among the soldiers, I learned, but about the attitude of the officers' corps nothing was known.

I met friends and they informed me that all the parties of Frankfurt had formed a "Welfare Committee" and would address an appeal to the population to keep calm and create no disorder. What was the meaning of this Welfare Committee? It could only be an attempt to prevent the revolutionary wave from reaching this part of the country. I saw Robert, and we agreed to issue a warning against this manœuvre.

Again I went into the streets, now more crowded. We decided to go to the barracks to establish contact with the soldiers. Heinrich Huttmann, a member of the Reichstag, an Independent Socialist, joined us. We were well received. Huttmann spoke first. I followed. I told them of the events in the navy, the sailors' message, and our determination to have southwestern Germany follow their lead—if necessary, smashing all resistance. Enthusiastic applause! The soldiers support the revolution! They would set up soldiers' councils. Before we could leave, I was approached and told that some soldiers had been arrested for insubordination. Would it not be an

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appropriate first act of the republic to have them released? At once I asked for the keys of the military jail. They were given to me. The released soldiers, full of gratitude for their unexpected freedom, embraced me.

However, it was time to rush to the Schlesinger Eck. Our friends from the factories must have arrived long ago. It was difficult to walk in the streets, they were so clogged with masses of people. No news yet from Berlin, but at least in Frankfurt the people were backing the revolution.

A thick cloud of smoke covered the gathering in the Schlesinger Eck. I heard Robert's voice calling the names of all important factories and asking for the names of their delegates. Virtually all were represented, especially the munitions factories. Never had this place been so crowded. Robert gave an account of the latest events in the nation. He argued that the sailors' rebellion would not be localized: the movement would spread, and it was our task to give it direction. Robert had the unlimited confidence of the workers. They knew him as a man who would be audacious when the moment came but who would always act in the interests of the masses. He would not frivolously risk adventures but neither would he fear to take a chance. He never undertook anything without planning his strategy. His second step was considered before he undertook the first. He was loved by the factory workers, who were cheered by his singing Rhenish dialect.

I followed Robert on the platform, giving a report of my experiences of the day and sketching what I thought must be the next steps.

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"If Berlin is not yet ready, the provinces must act for themselves and push in the direction of the revolution," I said. "We cannot wait for Berlin. Waiting longer can bring great danger. The establishment of this suspicious 'Welfare Committee' in Frankfurt is a distinct warning. If we do not act rapidly, the reaction will seize the opportunity to regain influence. We must create an unalterable situation and do our job well. Other provinces will follow. Frankfurt must lead for south-western Germany. That makes our quick decision the more necessary. Is there a guarantee of success? No revolution has had a one hundred per cent. guarantee of success, but our chances are excellent at the moment. Not only are the masses ready, but the ruling classes feel their own weakness."

And here I related some of my experiences of the last days with employers and their realization that great changes might be inevitable.

"If we act swiftly and thoroughly, great things may be accomplished without violence. Let us use the opportunity given us for the first time."

Robert and I had agreed to recommend the declaration of a general strike for the next morning. But first our friends must go back to their shops and organize elections of Workers' Councils which would become the ruling instruments of the republic. It was Robert's task to work out the details of the election. The duration of the strike could not yet be set; it depended upon events in the nation and further developments in our district. Of course, the striking workers could not expect to receive strike relief. It was to be a political strike, which is not financed but arises out of a readiness to sacrifice for the common

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good. All understood that, and all were ready. They had starved and suffered for a goal that they felt was not theirs. Now they would do it readily for the people's cause.

At this point one of our friends in the army arrived to tell us that simultaneously with our meeting of the shop stewards, a gathering of soldiers' councils was taking place in the elegant hotel, the Frankfurter Hof. Great confusion governed their deliberations. Unknown men had taken the leadership, and there was immediate need for intervention by a person of political experience ; otherwise all we decided here would be defeated by the inexperience of the soldiers. Robert was ready to go, and it took him the greater part of the night to handle this most difficult job.

In the first hours of the revolution we encountered what was to prove to be its main handicap, the Soldiers' Councils. The soldiers, to a large extent, were completely untrained politically. What they demanded was the end of the war with as little disturbance as possible. They wanted to be able to go home and to work. They were not concerned with the need to uproot those forces which had led the people into war. They neither knew nor understood enough of social and economic currents. But for the moment they had the arms and they had a voice in establishing the new Germany. The programme of the Soldiers' Councils in contrast with that of the workers, was not revolutionary. They were weary of the war and, of course, were ready to support the young republic. But what kind of republic it would be did not concern them too much. They could not understand why the political parties should worry

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about a programme of action. Practice would reveal the tasks to be done. That you can lose your cause when you do not see clearly ahead, plan and firmly execute your programme, did not occur to them.

While Robert was struggling at the Frankfurter Hof, I had taken the chair in the shop stewards' meeting. We could not suspend the course of the revolution while the soldiers talked. Details of the general strike had to be arranged. I did it on the basis of information that the more experienced men furnished.

There were several obstacles we had to be prepared to meet. Our experiences with the Frankfurt police force in the past had not been favourable. The police commissioner, Riess von Scheurnschloss, was a man of the old aristocracy, entirely devoted to the old regime. He could not be left in power without endangering the safety of the new democratic institutions. We had had no word from him during all these turbulent hours. Quick decision was necessary. I asked the men to authorize me to have the police commissioner arrested. It was then nearly three o'clock in the morning. I chose four men to go to the main police station and, if necessary, to the commissioner's home. But I did not expect the chief of Frankfurt's police to be at home on the night when his regime was threatened with demolition.

"What shall we do with the man once we have him arrested?" asked one of the men who had been assigned the task.

"Take him to the Frankfurter Hof and give him into the custody of the Soldiers' Council," I ordered. "The Soldiers' Councils will have the task of maintain-

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ing public order, while we, the Workers' Councils, will be in charge of all civil affairs."

The assembly agreed, and the four men left while we went on with our business.

An hour later they returned and gave us their report. The police commissioner had not been found at the main police station. He had been at home, asleep! Crowds were pushing through the streets; barracks were taken over, prisoners released, red flags flown from the central station; soldiers and workers were deliberating and making decisions of great consequence—and during all that time the old Prussian police chief had slept soundly, perhaps even undisturbed by dreams. Could there be a better illustration of how aloof this caste was from the life of the people? The leader of the delegation, R., had forced the commissioner to leave his bed and to dress. R. asked him whether he was ready to recognize the new authorities. The commissioner, in complete ignorance of the extent to which the revolutionary movement had grown during his slumber, would not commit himself. Thereupon he was arrested and, according to instructions, placed in custody at the Frankfurter Hof. He was never reinstated. We in our province did things thoroughly. His first successor, appointed the night of his arrest, was Dr. Hugo Sinzheimer, a lawyer and professor of social science at the University of Frankfurt, who was later succeeded by men from the labour movement.

But let us go back to the Schlesinger Eck. The next important personality to be reckoned with was the mayor of the city, Herr Voigt. He was given the alternative of recognizing the new regime or resigning.

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He came to the council to declare that he was ready to place himself entirely at the disposal of the Workers and Soldiers' Council. Although not a revolutionist, he kept his promise.

Meanwhile, Robert had returned, and I asked to take the chair again. He reported on his attempt to bring the two councils together. He had finally succeeded in making arrangements for collaboration. Time was pressing, and much work was still ahead of us. None of us was tired—we were living such tense and happy hours. We were a community bound together by reciprocal confidence. I, therefore, was not surprised that nobody questioned my leadership although I was only in my twenties and there were many greybeards in the hall.

Robert thought that it was time to prepare a proclamation to the population, informing it of what had occurred during the night and inviting it to join the movement and support the newly born republic. The assembly assigned the task of composing this proclamation to Dr. Georg Plotke and me. We immediately went to work. Dr. Plotke was a young dramatist of the municipal theatres, a gifted writer who in spite of his official position had been courageous enough to join our movement during the war. A real idealist, he put himself at the disposal of the labour movement in a most unselfish way. Alas, he was soon to become a victim of this unselfishness. A few weeks later elections approached, and he was asked to campaign in the Taunus Mountains. Georg, although affected by a serious attack of influenza, left his bed to do his duty. A few days later we had to bury this dear friend, this very promising young talent.

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That night of revolution we sat and together tried to elaborate the text of our appeal. But Georg, although a man of letters, had had no experience in political life and had not yet had the opportunity to know the masses. Finally he asked me to write the proclamation and to submit it to him ; together we would then present it to the shop stewards. I was in a mood of exaltation. Was it not the great moment of the German people's life, the moment for which we had lived and for which we had prepared during four dismal years ? Could not some of our keenest dreams now become reality ? Of course nothing seemed to have happened yet in the capital, but Berlin could not fail us ; revolution would soon come there too.

I wrote. I announced the success of the revolution, the establishment of a socialist republic. I advised the population that Workers' and Soldiers' Councils had been formed and now represented the supreme authority. The young republic would make the utmost effort to conclude a speedy and decent peace treaty. The proclamation closed with an appeal to the people to help establish a system of social justice.

Georg was enthusiastic. We brought the text to the gathering. They, too, fully approved. And now came the second part of our job. It was essential that all the newspapers that morning carry our proclamation. Thereupon the shop stewards assigned to Dr. Plotke and me the task of censors for the entire press. Together we went out. Seeing two sailors in a military car we stopped them, informed them of our mission and asked them to take us to all the newspaper offices in town, and this they did. At

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each newspaper office we demanded to see the chief editor and asked him to show us the galley proofs of the next day's paper. It did not occur to me that we might meet any serious resistance, although such a thought certainly would not have made us give up. But all the editors were co-operative. Reading the proofs, I found that they all planned to carry the appeal of the infamous "Welfare Committee," which was then on its way to political oblivion. We ordered the appeal out of the papers. It would only have created confusion. A few hours later the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and finally the other morning papers, appeared with big white spaces where the Welfare Committee's statement would have been. The Workers' Council's manifesto was published in full. During the night Hermann Wendel, a member of the Reichstag and a gifted writer, was made head of the semi-official news agency, the Wolff Telegraph Bureau, and was ordered to bar from it any counter-revolutionary manœuvres.

In co-operation with the Soldiers' Council we had immediately to take over the most difficult and most responsible job in a blockaded land—provision of sufficient food to feed the people. We were fortunate in having an excellent organizer ready to help us. The head of the military hospitals placed at our disposal his first aide, an extremely able man, who was to assist us in organizing the food supply for the civil population and the garrison.

It was dawn before all was done. No one had any thought of sleep. There would not be much opportunity to sleep anyway during the coming days. A cold shower and high nervous tension kept me wide awake. Would this be the great turning-point?

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Would we give the German people for the first time in their history the right to complete self-government? If we succeeded in this and could also abolish the old system of privileged castes and classes and make the Germans a really free and independent nation, then, I thought, a new era would begin, a new era not only for Germany, but for the peoples of all Europe. It was the hour of hope—and action.

V

DAYS OF REVOLUTION

THE morning is cool and unfriendly. A fine rain is pouring on us as we come into the street.

What are the people thinking? Will the revolution be victorious? Slowly, men, women, and children appear in the streets. Soon the thoroughfares are crowded. A holiday mood dominates the city. Has the young republic only fervent adherents among the population? Nearly everybody is wearing a small red ribbon! I suddenly realize that I myself have no red ribbon and no badge. Everyone seems to be cheerful, undisturbed by the rain. Have they all become revolutionaries? For some of them, at least, it seems to me to be too sudden a conversion to be true. This unexpected, universal republican fervour makes me feel highly suspicious. Were some of them not men who had hailed the Kaiser, bowed to the aristocracy, railed against France, denounced the Allies? Too sudden was the change—one night of bold measures had been enough. Firm convictions are not acquired so rapidly.

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seemed extremely glad that the working class had the courage to undertake liquidation of the bankrupt old regime.

What a task was before us! I had an immediate presentiment of obstacles arising in all directions, although for the moment everything seemed to go smoothly. But of the many difficulties that were soon to appear on the horizon, especially difficulties created by foreign countries and by our own military and civil authorities, nobody could know on this promising morning of November 9, 1918.

Our shop stewards had gone to their factories to arrange for the election of Workers Councils. Immediately we were concerned with another problem. How many would come to the Osthafen, the grounds at the outskirts of the city, where we had called them for a "rally of the masses"? Our doubts were soon removed. When, together with Robert Dissmann, I reached the grounds, hundreds already awaited us. Soon great masses followed. Thousands first, then tens of thousands. Before long the vast area was black with men and women. Huttmann, Robert, and I were the speakers. We had no amplifiers. A few trucks had been parked here and there, and I had to climb from one to another, to speak again and again to reach all those who wished to hear. Enthusiasm ran high. An extraordinary inspiration united all of us. What tremendous possibilities the situation seemed to offer, if only we were equal to decisive deeds, especially in this first period of the revolution.

Ten years later I met an old friend of mine who had attended this mass rally. He told me how deeply he had been struck by the serious note of the speeches

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in that moment of triumph. In that first hour, we had warned the workers not to be too confident. The most important work had still to be accomplished. The revolution would be victorious only if it succeeded in building up completely new administrations in the army, in government, and in the judiciary. It would not be enough that a high official or a judge placed a little red ribbon in his buttonhole. He must be a genuine friend of the new order. The forces which had striven for annexations and continuation of the war were still there, though for the moment not audible. They were supported by the wealthy agrarians in East Prussia and by the barons of coal, iron, and steel in western Germany. They must be dethroned in order that democracy might be safe. That must be among the first deeds of the revolutionary central government which was to be formed. Our task, the mission of the masses who understood the meaning of these historic events, was to back the new government and to protect it with our lives as soon as it met with the active resistance of the forces of the past.

Often, since Germany has turned to acts of barbaric cruelty, I have been asked by people who seemed to be very revolutionary (although they had never gone through the experience of a revolution themselves), "Why did not the Germans in November, 1918, when the revolutionaries still had the power, execute the counter-revolutionaries?" Whom should the revolution have executed? No opponent then appeared—no Hitler, no Goebbels, and no Göring. It is even reported that Hitler in those days joined the Majority Socialists. There may be moments in history when

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energetic, rapid action is necessary, even to decreeing the extreme penalty. But that is not essential to a revolution. The fundamental transformation of the economic and political system, the creative task, is far more important, and it alone can give us the right to speak of a genuine revolution.

In those exciting November days nobody dared to commit himself to the regime of the past. A scene I never shall forget was the visit of a general of the high command of the eighteenth army corps to the more than humble headquarters of the Workers' Council. He arrived solemnly, dressed in civilian clothes, to place himself at the disposal of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. He expressed an understanding of the things that had happened these last days and, apparently in a spirit of genuine patriotism, wanted to support the masses in the interest of the well-being of the nation. Only those who have known the proud caste of German generals can realize what an amount of self-denial this man needed for his step. Was he sincere? He seemed to be ; but the councils nevertheless assigned control to two of its delegates to make sure.

This contact with the officers of the *Generalkommando* furnished a solution to the puzzle of why I had not been arrested during the war, although some of my less active comrades had been. One of the officers asked me, "Do you know, Frau ¹ Sender, why you

¹ In German political life it is customary to refer to a woman who takes part in public affairs as Frau ("Mrs.") whether or not she be married. It was as Frau Sender that the author of this autobiography became known in Germany. It was natural, on her trips to this country, for "Frau" to be translated as "Mrs." and the author therefore has become known as Mrs. Sender though she never has married.

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were not arrested?" My answer was, "Because I committed no offence!"

"I don't know about that," he retorted, "but I do know that the high command of the army wanted your arrest and asked your employer to dismiss you from your position in the metal trust. But your employer declared he would not dismiss you; that your activities after office hours were none of his concern. He said he was convinced, however, that you would not work against the interests of the nation, and he was willing to give a guarantee for your loyal attitude. This guarantee gave you your liberty."

I was amazed. Of course I was convinced I had acted during the entire war in the best interests of the nation. But the chivalry of my employer in assuming such an undertaking with the highest military authority, without mentioning a word to me, was impressive indeed.

Things had finally begun to move rapidly in Berlin, too. A Council of People's Representatives was formed, taking the place of a central government. My friend and party leader, Hugo Haase, was one of the members. They rendered accounts to the newly formed Workers' and Soldiers' Councils of Berlin. The Kaiser and the Crown Prince had renounced the throne. Strangely enough, the news of this event did not provoke a sensation. The German monarchy's abdication was acknowledged without regret.

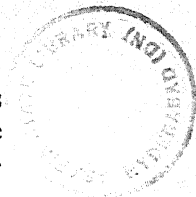
Our Workers' Council undertook its duties immediately. It elected its executive, of which I became a member with the function of secretary. The council was very popular. Many personalities and people of

all classes wanted to become members, but their admission would have been at variance with the purpose of the new institution : to be the expression of the new forces, disinherited in the old regime, which had taken over power to build up a new state. As secretary, I was in charge of admissions. During our first meeting, Dr. Hermann Luppe, the deputy mayor of the city, and Dr. Wilhelm Cohnstädt, editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, appeared and demanded the right to enter in the name of the Liberal party. There was great embarrassment among the members of the council who guarded the entrance. Could one refuse admission to the mayor and a well-known editor? I went to the door and asked the gentlemen what they desired. They repeated their request.

"I am very sorry, gentlemen, but you cannot enter as long as you are not members of the Workers' Council. They only are assembled here, not the old parties."

A moment of surprise—but my decision was accepted. Later we became very good friends, and often, when we met, my dear friend, Dr. Cohnstädt, would remind me that at our first meeting I had shut the door in his face. In his fine feeling for justice he recognized, however, that I was perfectly right and that a similar attitude by the leaders of the revolution in big as well as in small things would have led us further towards our objectives. Alas, Wilhelm Cohnstädt, a genuine republican and one of the finest characters I have met, became one of the first victims of the counter-revolution of 1933. He escaped the Nazis and found asylum in the United States, but he could not survive humiliation and exile. The barbarians had killed a too sensitive soul.

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The tasks of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils were manifold. Not only was it necessary to keep the normal functioning of the administration under control, but emergencies came up almost every hour. The formation of Farmers' Councils was demanded by some villages and they asked for military protection. People came to offer their services, others wanted information. The university had to be put under the control of the Workers' Council. Dr. Hugo Sinzheimer, the new police commissioner, took it upon himself to accomplish this task and addressed the university senate in a speech characteristic of the spirit of the revolution.

"I come," he said, "to tell you that the new Germany wants to cultivate the intellect and humanism. The representatives of the revolution are inspired by reverence for both. We don't come to offer you coercion and oppression. What I have to offer you is freedom and confidence, freedom for science and research. You have only to serve the truth and nothing else."

The rector of the university answered that the faculty and senate recognized the authority of the Workers' Council, but it was symptomatic that at this early moment the students tried to protest. They did not appreciate the liberty for science and truth offered by the republic and later helped to bring on the regime of oppression and regimentation of science, where the search for truth for truth's sake is prohibited.

We had decided to send a delegation to the City Council to put it under the control of the Workers' Council. The City Council assembled for that pur-

pose. Georg Bernard, a worker and an officer of the Metal Workers Union, led the delegation with much dignity. When he had ended his address and the mayor, after deliberation with the senior members, had announced that the City Council and all officials of the city accepted the Workers' Council as the highest authority, Bernard asked the mayor to hoist the red flag on the City Hall tower. He had been foresighted enough to bring a large red flag with him, so there was no chance for delay!

But there was still the Board of Aldermen, the more conservative body of the city administration, composed mostly of learned elderly gentlemen. I was among the four representatives assigned by the Workers' Council to control all activity of the board. They had to invite me to every one of their meetings. And they did, though reluctantly. The three men assigned to the task with me seldom appeared, so that I had to lead the fight with the old men all by myself. Some of them, of course, thought they could take advantage of this fact and tried to bind me to rash commitments. But I was on my guard.

"What is the Workers' Council's opinion on the subject?" one of them would suddenly shoot at me, in the hope of embarrassing this young person, ignoring my business experience and the responsibilities I had handled before. Quietly I would answer, if the matter was sufficiently familiar to me. When it was not, I simply admitted the fact and asked for suspension of the decision until I had discussed the problem with the council's executive. One of the aldermen, a Professor S., nevertheless tried the manoeuvre again and again, although in vain. He probably did not

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realize that I had begun to enjoy the procedure as a useful and pleasant mental sport, a good preparatory school for my subsequent activities. I am still grateful to the old gentlemen who tried so hard to torture me.

During those first weeks of the republic I had very little time to sleep. Many a night we had to work straight through on great problems. What should be done with the 70,000 or 80,000 munitions workers and the returning soldiers? The employers intended to go on with the manufacture of munitions. Of course they assumed that government contracts would go on. We rigidly opposed that idea. This was a new regime that wanted to show the world its will for peace. Our decision was that the manufacture of war instruments had to be stopped immediately. We would collaborate in the shift to peace production, but would not permit discharge of workers. The working day was to be not longer than eight hours, and we reduced it to only four hours, when necessary, to make place for the homecoming soldiers.

A bad omen appeared in the early hours of the revolution, when the first news of the armistice conditions was received. It was the first snow that fell on the young buds of our revolutionary expectations. The Allies demanded immediate evacuation of Belgium and France—which was only just—but also, within fourteen days, of Alsace-Lorraine, which was more difficult since it had been German territory for almost fifty years. The allies, moreover, demanded evacuation of the left bank of the Rhine by German troops, delivery of 5,000 locomotives and 150,000 railway cars, a neutral zone on the right bank of the Rhine, payment by Germany for the maintenance

of the foreign army of occupation, and the release of prisoners of war without reciprocity for captured Germans. The blockade was to go on. German ships might be seized. The last two conditions were a very poor promise for the coming peace treaty. They betrayed a spirit without mercy for the German people, who had driven out those responsible for the policy of the past and who now manifested a strong and spontaneous will for peace and justice. Alas! The Allies did not understand this and lost a wonderful opportunity to make a better world. It is to a large extent on account of this blind spirit of victory and revenge that two decades later the world is paying with war and the waste of billions.

The hostility of the foreign authorities towards the new people's state manifested itself in still another way. When the representatives of the Allies came to negotiate the conditions for the execution of the armistice, a British admiral demanded that no representative of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils be a member of the German negotiating committee—an open affront to the German republican masses. All our attempts to plead for more understanding for our cause abroad were of no avail. As early as November 15 the women of Frankfurt sent a radio message to the United States imploring the Allies to end the hunger blockade, which, now that the war was over, was directed exclusively against the civil population, starving women and babies. Shortly after that the Government of the People's Commissars sent an appeal to the working classes of all countries to help end the hunger war against a defenceless people. But all in vain—the Allies were inexorable against the

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republic. The blockade continued after the signing of the armistice.

What an almost impossible task it was under these circumstances for the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils to provide the population with food! The situation was further complicated by the dislocations involved in demobilizing an army of millions of soldiers. Add to this the fact that all soldiers had to be withdrawn not only from foreign soil but also from the left bank of the Rhine by December 9. Since Frankfurt was one of the central points of the border near the territory to be occupied by the Allies after the armistice, our councils were responsible for bringing back the troops with the utmost speed. The soldiers would otherwise become prisoners of war.

They were mostly unknown men who took care of this tremendous task—and it was almost a miracle that they succeeded. Frankfurt had put at the disposal of the troops fifty-two of her schools. At one station and on a single day 60,000 soldiers were received! It was a terrific task, demanding a maximum of devotion and talent for organization. What bothered us as much as board for the soldiers was their political tendencies. These were men from the trenches who had not read an honest newspaper for a long period and were ignorant of much that had happened. Many, so we were told, were still under the influence of their conservative officers. Rapidly we had to prepare leaflets informing the soldiers of recent events. Messengers were sent to meet them before their arrival in Frankfurt.

During these weeks I was still an employee of the metal trust. I knew that my employer was being

urged by the heads of other firms to fire me. They thought it intolerable that a person so active in the revolution should be the head of a department of a capitalist concern. Not wishing to damage the firm, I asked my employer if he thought we could go on in spite of the fact that I was at the office very irregularly, for I was frequently detained by Workers' Council activities. Again I met the same generous attitude.

"If you think you can serve the common good, I do not want to prevent you from doing so. I know you will tell me if ever you feel that your activities in both fields are incompatible," Dr. S. replied.

In those days it was considered a privilege to obtain a permit to ride on the railways or to drive a car. Permits were issued by the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. If it was a privilege, it certainly was no pleasure. Train equipment had run down during the war. On account of the coal shortage, cars were not heated. And it happened to be a cold winter. Besides being occupied with my office work, my activity for the Workers' Council, and my control of the Board of Aldermen, I was one of the main party speakers for a large district, including the provinces of Hessen-Nassau and Hessen-Kassel and the state of Baden. Though I had caught a severe cold, I had, nevertheless, to go on with my work—you cannot go to the hospital when you are needed for things that promise to prepare a great future. Worse than the unheated railway cars were the old, worn-out, open army automobiles put at our disposal! Not only was one exposed to cold, rain, and wind, but these cars had come from the front and had not been

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repaired or given any attention. They usually broke down when one was riding late in the night on a distant highway in a drenching rain or snow. One had to stop and wait, sometimes for hours, until the necessary repairs were made, the tyres vulcanized, or often more difficult work done. There was not much traffic on the highways, especially at so late an hour. Often it was breakfast time before we returned to Frankfurt. After two or three meetings the same evening in different towns, where I usually was the only speaker, I felt some need for a rest—but was glad when I found the time for a shower.

On one of those numerous trips to Baden we almost became French prisoners. Driving back during the night from Mannheim on a slippery road, in snowy weather, all of a sudden, on our way through the Messeler Park, we ran into French bayonets! We did not know that the French had occupied the territory that night. My driver was terrified. He saw himself a French prisoner.

"Be calm," I told him, "and do as I tell you."

I spoke to the soldiers in my best Parisian accent, explaining to them my ignorance and desire to comply with the law. I did not miscalculate. Being approached by a lady, they responded as gentlemen and said they would not see us if we vanished.

"Rush back as fast as you can," I told my driver, who had not understood a word of our conversation but who did as ordered and was mighty glad to escape.

Finally, I could not withstand the drain on my strength any longer. A high fever and a severe attack of influenza affected my lungs. The doctor told my

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sister Recha, who by chance had come that day to Frankfurt, that my family should be prepared for the end. But I survived the critical night, and, as soon as I could think again, wrote the articles which our weekly expected from me. But the fever persisted and I had to stay in bed.

Meanwhile, the government had decided on elections to the Constituent Assembly as early as January 19. The campaign had to begin very soon. Our constituency included territory occupied by the Allied armies, and everyone who wanted to address meetings in the occupied zone needed a special permit from the foreign military authorities. In our party I was the only one who had been granted such a permit for certain specified days. Those days were approaching, and the high fever had not yet left me. Robert came to see me.

"I am sorry," he said, "but you are the only one who has received permission to speak. Here are the permits. We cannot possibly let them expire without making use of them. You must go, Toni. Do your best."

"I'm afraid I haven't the strength yet to do it," I felt compelled to answer. "I still feel dizzy and am afraid I could not stand on my feet and speak for an hour."

"Then speak less than an hour," Robert replied. "It is impossible for the party not to be heard in the occupied territory before election day."

"All right. I will try it."

And they sent an open army car to take me to Höchst, Hattersheim, and other occupied towns. It was physically my most difficult job. My fever was

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high. I was too dizzy to stand during my speech and had to ask for a chair. I went through with all the meetings, but when I finally reached home I felt I would collapse.

Similar foolhardy experiences gnawed at my health. I should have to pay for it later. But in those days duty to the cause came before everything else—family, personal interest, health—everything.

The date for convening the Constituent Assembly had become the crucial point of a controversy between the two wings of the revolution—a controversy that was reflected in our Workers' Council. The conservatives of all shades suddenly were tremendously enthusiastic about democracy. They could not have it fast enough.

"As quickly as possible, the Constituent Assembly! Equal rights for every citizen!" they shouted. "No delay of general elections!"

The overwhelming majority of us were for democracy, but that could not prevent those among us who had understood the meaning of the revolution from demanding that the government should first satisfy the claims of the revolutionary masses: accomplish such a change in the fundamental structure of the new republic that a repetition of such disasters as the World War would be made impossible.

To accomplish this, we must dethrone those powers responsible for the past—otherwise all the work of the revolution would have to be repeated some day, and possibly the price of this negligence would be very high. However, there was a strange combination of forces against us. All the reactionaries saw their opportunity to escape any fundamental change and

shouted, "Election ! Democracy !" The Majority Socialists (the right wing) were not prepared for revolutionary changes and were perfectly satisfied to have only parliamentary government. The soldiers, weary and desiring only to get back home and again lead a normal life, joined them. The discussion came up in our Frankfurt Workers' Council. We showed that it was against the interest of the republic to precipitate the elections. The soldiers returned home slowly. Many of them had been out of touch with political matters for four years. The Independent Social Democratic Party, during the entire period of the war, had been cut off from public opinion, and all its public activity had been prohibited. We had to reach the masses before a fundamental decision was taken.

"They could wait almost sixty years, without giving us equal rights," Robert exclaimed in the Workers' Council meeting. "Now suddenly they manifest such a suspicious love for democracy."

It was in the same mood that I addressed a mass meeting on December 1, 1918.

"The heavy burden that will follow the war can be borne only by a society that has changed the entire structure of the state. The inexorable armistice conditions are to be attributed not to the revolution but to the unfortunate treaty of Brest-Litovsk dictated by the regime of the Kaiser. But the other side, those who are now putting their feet on a defeated nation's neck, should not forget that a certain kind of victory may imply defeat in the future."

These words, spoken in 1918, to-day sound almost like a prophecy. . . .

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When you are active in public life during a revolution, it is inevitable that you create enemies. Some people suspect your intentions because, arguing from their own characters, they cannot imagine anybody's acting from a feeling of duty to the common good. I received many scurrilous letters, using expressions such as "sow", "filthy hag", etc. Some of these letters contained threats of murder. Naturally there were also letters from unknown friends expressing their appreciation. I did not pay any attention to threats; the letters immediately were thrown into the wastepaper basket. But others seemed to take the threats more seriously. One day I was summoned to appear before the representative of the French military authority in the neutral zone, the Marquis de X.

"Do you know that your life is threatened?" he asked me.

"I do not think so, monsieur," I replied, although I had already received some threatening letters. "Those who plan murder usually don't announce it."

"I would not be too confident," he went on. "Our service has information that makes us consider the threats more seriously. Are you armed?"

"No, monsieur, I have never had a gun in my hands and I would not know how to handle one."

"Here is a small revolver. Take it and I shall show you how to handle it."

I accepted the weapon and received from this French officer my first lesson in marksmanship. It was not to be the only time in my life when I was threatened with death.

Towards the end of 1918 my party decided to pub-

lish a daily newspaper for our district and to make me the editor. They asked me to give up my position in the metal concern and to accept the new job. I was reluctant, for I had no experience in editorial work. I had never done any before. They certainly could find somebody who was better qualified than I. Besides that, I did not want to give up my position in business. I had achieved recognition, was receiving a high salary, and had a promising future before me. I had worked for years to obtain recognition of a woman's ability to assume such responsibilities, had gone through many painful experiences in order to obtain equal rights and equal opportunities for a woman.

"And there is another, perhaps a more serious reason," I went on. "I have always loved to work for the movement, but have done it as an honorary job without receiving any salary for it. That has given me great independence, which I would hate to surrender. Of course this situation means a double job—one professional during the daytime, and another, voluntary, at night. But I prefer this double burden for the sake of my liberty. I do not want to receive any money for my activity in the movement."

"That sounds very unselfish and proud, but don't you see that it is actually quite egoistic?" Robert asked me. "Do you think I am less proud and independent than you because I devote my entire time and strength to the movement and receive a modest salary for it?"

This impressed me as somewhat justified. I asked for three days to think the matter through. When, after this period, they continued to urge me to accept

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the job with a small salary (not half of what I received at the metal firm), I accepted. When I went to my employer to tell him the news, he was surprised and tried to dissuade me. Unsuccessful, he invited me to his home to discuss the matter more fully. I would not find the satisfaction I expected, he suggested. And I certainly would not receive any gratitude for the sacrifice I was going to make. I should listen to the advice of an older, more experienced man, one who had no other motive but my interest, he argued.

"I have considered that many times, Mr. S.," I replied, "and am very grateful for your kindness. I know I can expect no gratitude for what I shall do. The only reward will be in the feeling of having done my duty. But I think that in these days, where labour is confronted with so many new tasks, we just have to help, be it in our personal interest or not."

A last attempt was made by my employer when he sent to me Professor A., a scientific consultant of the firm who knew me well from our business relationship and who always had shown genuine interest in my career. He told me of the experience of his brother-in-law, who had been a secretary of the Bavarian government and had, in spite of his strong idealism, been gradually disillusioned.

"I have no illusions. I am prepared for ingratitude. I think I have to go my way," I replied.

So I parted, not without regret, from men who had shown me friendship and recognition, to begin a career which was accompanied by many hardships but which did not lack the leaven of true comradeship.

My introduction to the *Volksrecht*, our new daily paper, was a rather cruel one. Only one day of

apprenticeship was afforded me. I went to Halle, where I had a good friend, an editor of a daily. During a few hours' talk he gave me a rapid course in the technique of the profession. And then I started. The office I was given looked very inauspicious. It was not very clean and was furnished only with a rudimentary table and chair, a glue-pot, and scissors. Was that all they offered me? No, there was something more for which I was not too well prepared. No sooner had I begun to work than I was afflicted with bites. Looking for the cause, I discovered that the place swarmed with fleas! But there was no choice—the paper had to be ready and I had to do my work. By evening my whole body looked tattooed. I found out that until the evening before the place had been used by soldiers returning from the front. They carried the insects and seemed to be immune to them. I certainly would never have returned to the place if I had had my way.

I assume that few of my newspaper colleagues abroad have had to go through such experiences as I did at the outset of my journalistic career. Appointed chief editor, I found that my duties were manifold. There were two of us to do all the editorial work for a daily afternoon paper that had to compete with others of long standing. And we did it successfully. My field was home and foreign affairs, labour, literature, the arts. We had very few contributors because we could not pay them. My colleague handled local and district matters. The only way to get the paper ready in time was to start in the early morning hours. That was necessary also because in the beginning the printing plant lacked modern equipment. To get the

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paper out, I had to begin work at three-thirty or four in the morning, to a large extent writing most of the paper myself.

I had to write all the editorials and the news leaders, taking a stand on all important problems. In many cases we were the first to tackle the discussion of new problems. Of course, that required a tremendous amount of concentration and strict self-discipline. When, later, important discussions started in the Constituent Assembly in Weimar, I asked a friend, a member of the assembly, to give me a report every night by telephone. These reports came late in the night because, as in the rest of the world, rates were then cheaper. It was all our paper could afford. The only way one person alone could handle it was to remain in the office throughout the night. At first I arranged a bed out of newspapers, but my associates recognized that that was too uncomfortable, and I was offered a couch.

My working day during this period was between nineteen and twenty hours. The executive of the Workers' Council required my services almost daily, and the evenings were taken up by lectures and meetings. I nevertheless found time to write a series of articles on the fundamentals of "Wage, Price, and Currency", which were published in a booklet and much discussed. Shortly after that a young student came to see me at the newspaper office.

"I come in the name of Professor G. of the University of Frankfurt. We plan to discuss your pamphlet in his seminar, and the professor invites you to attend the discussion."

"I should love to do so," I replied, "especially

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because I know Professor G. is a conservative, but my day has only twenty-four hours and twenty of them are already taken by work. So I am sorry I have to resist the temptation."

And the temptation was great indeed ; first of all because I love an intellectual fight, and still more because I should have liked to discuss timely economic problems with young people who had not yet found their places in the new order. However, once you are in public life you can no longer do all the things you like. Other and sometimes very unpleasant obligations approach you.

One day as I was working on current problems at the executive of the Workers' Council, a telephone call came from a friend at police headquarters.

"In the old part of the city a mob is starting to loot shops and police stations," he said. "Aren't there a few comrades who could rush immediately to the scene of the riot and try to prevent the people from continuing their plundering? The police chief wants to avoid bloodshed, if possible, but it can be done only with your help."

Robert Dissmann and I declared ourselves ready to make an effort. Before we could leave the Workers' Council building, another message came telling us that a crowd of rioters had gone to the court-house to set it on fire. Hastily we agreed that Robert should go to the court-house while I went to the old city.

I rushed towards the river—and my guess was right. As in all very old cities, there were slums, and some slum dwellers were not responsive to the new Germany. Among them were many honest people, real workers

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and trade unionists. But in those narrow, winding alleys other elements too found refuge.

Crowds were massed before a police station at the quay of the Main. Reams of files had been thrown from the windows. The station had been set on fire. Among the crowd a few men recognized me. Quickly I explained my task and asked them to lift me on their shoulders so that I could address the crowd. They did as I asked and I started to speak, warning the decent people among the crowd not to tolerate acts which could please only enemies of the revolution. The workers would be held responsible. It was very suspicious, I shouted, that some elements should instigate an act that could only soil the cause of the masses. I could not go on. Some in the crowd tried to support me, which was only the signal for the instigators of the looting and arson to shout :

"Into the river with her. Let her follow the sailor."

Someone approached me.

"For God's sake, stop or you will be lost. Only ten minutes ago they drowned a sailor, sent by the police commissioner, who tried to quiet the crowd just as you are doing. Don't you see you cannot reason with this mob?"

And with all his energy he pulled me away. I probably owe him my life but have never known even his name.

The experience made me apprehensive for Robert's safety. I rushed to the court-house. A huge crowd had gathered around it. From the windows of the building men were throwing the court's files on a big heap in the street. From time to time there was the

crack of an explosion. Ringleaders had put grenades on the heap and these were exploding.

"Where is Robert, has anybody seen him?" I asked in anxiety.

"He is in the building trying to stop the looters."

I tried to get into the court-house. The police implored me to desist.

"Then try to find Robert Dissmann. He may be in danger."

They promised and finally came out with Robert, who was exhausted but who had succeeded in quenching the fire that the plunderers had started to set in the building.

We barely had time to exchange our experiences when a new message reached us.

"The mob is starting to loot the shops in the centre of the city. Do go and stop them."

This time we asked police assistance. For hours we followed the route of the rioters. Late in the evening all was over—without further loss of life. We could be proud of the achievement of the Workers' Council and the police of Frankfurt.

Soon afterwards it came out that some special interests must have been behind the plunderers. Particular sets of files had been destroyed in the court-house and in some police stations, files proving usurious trade and frauds by war and blockade profiteers. They had aroused the mob for their own purposes—and an honest sailor had lost his life. General bloodshed had been avoided by a hair's breadth.

VI

COUNTER-REVOLT: THE KAPP PUTSCH

WHAT we thought would become the social revolution did not develop in the direction or with the speed planned by those of us who had sat together on the night of November 8-9. The result of the elections to the Constituent Assembly gave a majority to those parties opposed to a fundamental social change. Our apprehensions when we resisted a precipitate convocation of that assembly were completely justified. The masses of the people could not find their orientation during such a short period. Especially backward were the millions of soldiers. Even those at home had been prevented by a thorough censorship from learning what was going on in the country. Was it intentional that those who hastened elections did not give us a chance to enlighten the people? While the Independent Socialists won only twenty-two seats in the elections of January, 1919, to the Constituent Assembly, on March 2 of the same year the result of the municipal elections in Prussia confirmed the expectation that time would work for us.

In the city of Frankfurt the Independent Socialists elected eight members out of ninety to the City Council. I was one of them, the only woman of my

party. With the exception of Heinrich Huttmann, we were all newcomers. But never before or since have I met a group in which collaboration was more genuine or comradeship more sincere. Most of us were active political leaders with many other responsibilities. The municipalities in the new state had many new tasks—especially Frankfurt, because of its location in the “neutral” zone under partial control of the French. We knew we would be under severe scrutiny as a new group and also that our followers expected much more from us than from the average councilman. I, more than the others, had to meet and vanquish prejudice.

“What can this firebrand accomplish in a City Council?” my opponents said.

They were afraid of me during the period of the revolution and expected only incendiary words. I knew it and was conscious of the fact that I had to show them that to be a revolutionary in the true sense of the word implies also the faculty of working constructively and the ability to co-operate. My party assigned to me the task of serving on the Committee for Social Problems and on the Board of Education. The Council met once a week and the committees sometimes more frequently. Every one of us had to study all the matters on the agenda, the proposals and decrees, before our group met. Rapidly we divided the tasks. My fellow Socialists were greatly surprised when I told them, at our first group meeting, that one of the men would have to deal with matters concerning household problems. I would not do it, for every one of my opponents was prepared to scoff at me, knowing that I was not

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managing a household myself. I would not expose my weak spots. My friends laughed and agreed. In return I offered to take on part of the debates and discussions in the full sessions—a job in which I had acquired special skill through my experience in the wartime meetings and at the sessions with the old gentlemen of the Board of Aldermen.

What made the work in the City Council so pleasant and enjoyable was arousing the interest of the masses in city affairs and being supported by public opinion. The galleries, always empty in the old times, were now crowded. The public kept close contact with our work. It gave us a strong incentive and lent vigour to our speeches as well as to our work. The City Council during this period was an interesting scene for the citizens. And it must be so if we want democracy to be a virile regime. Many years later, after Robert and I had left Frankfurt, I met a former City Council colleague of the People's party (big business party). "How we regret that you and Dissmann have left us!" he said to me. "Although we did not agree, there was life in the City Council when you were active there!"

Our work in the plenary meetings was sometimes spectacular, but that on the committees was not. However, we did create important institutions that lasted until the dictator came and destroyed municipal self-government. I took special pride in the achievement of one difficult task: the municipalization of all welfare institutions, institutions which cared for human beings in need from the cradle to the grave. Our idea was to give persons who were in need through no fault of their own the right to

community support and not to force them to the humiliation of begging for charity. It was a tremendous task in a time of economic and financial difficulties for all municipalities and could be carried through only with the broad understanding that the deputy mayor of the city showed—the same man to whom I had to show the door at our first Workers' Council meeting! He did not bear a grudge because of that incident, for he realized that useful work could be done by collaboration. The burial of the dead, among other things, became municipalized. It was handled without profit and with delicate tact. Class differences vanished, at least at the gate of the cemetery.

Not less interesting was the influence of the new forces in the school system. With the help of a few very liberal-minded teachers Frankfurt was among the first cities to create modern municipal school systems immediately after the war. When I came to these schools and attended classes to see how our ideas worked in practice, I envied the pupils who were being given such a cheerful childhood while their learning in no way suffered. Not only those who entered school as little children enjoyed the care of the new state, but also those who had prematurely left school and gone into shops and offices. For eight hours a week, during the daytime, their employers had to permit them to attend continuation classes which we made compulsory for all apprentices. Here, too, something new had to be built up.

A rather delicate though highly necessary task was the hiring of new teachers for schools and *Gymnasien*

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(corresponding to elementary and secondary schools in Great Britain). It was urgent that we liberalize the staffs. The republic had set itself the task of bringing up the youth in the spirit of love for peace and freedom. Many of the old teachers belonged to the class of supernationalists. As many of them as possible had to be replaced. But caution had to be practised. Not infrequently we encountered those who had put red ribbons in their buttonholes through no deep conviction. On the other hand, where we met teachers with genuinely democratic political convictions but insufficient scholarship, we refused to reduce the standards we had set for our new school system. It often entailed a hard fight with the representatives of the parties of the right to effect the engagement of progressive teachers and professors, and it became harder with every year that we became further removed from the November revolution.

My memory of the City Council work, nevertheless, is a friendly one, because we met one another with respect, our discussions were on a high level, and we accomplished constructive tasks. Fortunately, I did not experience Nazi councilmen—their presence later changed the entire atmosphere.

Shortly after my election I had an experience, as a party leader and newspaper editor, which almost brought us to a terrible catastrophe. One afternoon I was alone in the newspaper office. A tall, rather thin woman, apparently pregnant, appeared at the newspaper office and asked for me. I received her and listened to what she had to say.

"I am a German White Guard officer's wife, but

am myself heart and soul with the revolution—reason enough for my husband to persecute me. I had to escape from the coast, where he lives. I am expecting my baby next week and must go as fast as possible to Augsburg (Bavaria), where I have a good friend in Comrade T., who certainly will help me. But in order to be able to travel further without danger I need a passport in some name other than my own. I know you have enough influence with the police commissioner to be able to have such a passport delivered to me. The White Guards are on my heels and everything has to be done with the greatest speed. Do feel with me as a woman, help me. Here, see my credentials.”

And she gave me a number of letters from known comrades in different cities on the coast. Would it not be a simple act of humanity to help this seemingly unhappy woman and give her a chance to give birth to her baby in the calm of the Bavarian mountains? The credentials she had presented seemed to be perfect. Why then did an inner voice warn me to be careful? The woman made an unpleasant impression upon me. Slight doubts of her pregnancy arose in my mind. I answered her :

“I do not know whether I can assist you. I must talk the matter over with my friends. Can I help you to stay somewhere during the night?”

“No, thank you, I have already found friendly people, friends of yours, who have given me hospitality.”

She gave me the name of her hosts, very poor, honest comrades.

After she had left me I was very restless. My

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doubts became stronger and stronger. She looked almost like a man—was she really pregnant? Something about her seemed to grate on me. But all her papers and credentials were genuine! I pondered over this for a great part of the night. I never was pitiless toward human beings in trouble. Should I urge the police commissioner to help her? He probably would do it upon my request. But why this inner doubt? If something were wrong about this person, I would be jeopardizing our entire position in the police organization, compromising the Workers' Council, and possibly giving the counter-revolution an eagerly awaited pretext for bloodshed. It had happened elsewhere!

To issue a false passport and then to be denounced by a spy—that would mean the intervention of the federal authorities in our police affairs. This intervention might serve as a pretext to arouse the masses and provoke them to an uprising. I felt that the entire responsibility lay on me. Finally I made up my mind. I had two alternatives—to refuse help to a woman in need and expose one individual to more hardship; and to hazard the revolution's important influence in the police department. I decided that for the moment I had to sacrifice the individual and guard the collective interest. After the decision was made I was calm and firm.

I informed the person in charge at the newspaper office not to bring the woman to my room but to tell her that I was sorry I was unable to help her. At the same time I warned my friends at police headquarters and told them of my decision. The personnel at the newspaper were furious. They thought me

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cruel and heartless and gave the "pregnant" woman all the hospitality she wanted.

Many months later, after I had become a member of the Reichstag, I was shocked to learn the true identity of the woman who had so mysteriously solicited my assistance in Frankfurt. Her name came out during proceedings of our Reichstag group against a member involved in the intrigues of a monarchist spy. My caller proved to be none other than the infamous spy and agent-provocateur, Frau Schröder-Mahnke, who was responsible for many riots and shootings and for the killing of many workers in the uprisings she had provoked. She was neither pregnant nor persecuted by the White Guards. On the contrary, she was in their service and had provoked the massacre of workers in Kiel. Later, disguised as a man, she was brought into the cells of jailed revolutionaries to win their confidence and make them confess. She would then appear in the courts as a witness against her former prison-mates. Then only did I learn what a terrible danger we had escaped, thanks to my distrust and the strong instinct that had warned me.

The dissatisfaction of great masses of workers with the trend of political developments was demonstrated to the delegates of the first post-war convention of the Independent Socialist party in March, 1919. While we delegates were gathering in Berlin, a general strike was declared by the restive workers of the city. Delegates entering the former Herrenhaus, where the convention took place, had to pass streets where machine-guns were firing; and the shooting continued during all the days of our deliberations. It

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was a political strike. The workers saw in it the only means of expressing first their demand for more decisive revolutionary measures and specifically their opposition to the formation of military organizations under the leadership of officers of the old German army. The central government obviously was impressed by this action, and while the strike and the shooting were still going on, we saw huge posters appear on the walls of the city with the promise of the government (in which we Independent Social Democrats were no longer represented) "Socialization is on the march". It always remained on the march and never arrived at the goal.

But a genuine revolutionary spirit was reflected in the discussions of the convention. I took a leading part in them. Actually it was my official entry upon the national scene of German politics.

"Our representatives in the Government of the People's Commissars should not have given their consent to the speedy convocation of the Constituent Assembly," I declared. "You answer my criticism with the argument that the assembly was forced to convene so quickly because during our whole past history we always had demanded democracy and a free suffrage. That is true. But we were experiencing a revolution which created a new law and required a new attitude. It was most regrettable that there was no co-ordination between the work of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in the different parts of the country and that of the assembly.

"The revolution had the task of establishing solid bases for the young republic by dethroning those powers of the past which through their economic

strength held the political power—the barons of the heavy industries and the Junkers of the big agrarian estates. However, every day while fighting for this goal, we heard, ‘You cannot socialize *now* because our entire economic machinery is in a desperate condition.’ But do you really want to wait until the powers of the past have so well recovered as to become influential again? The German people are not by nature very revolutionary—once the revolutionary movement had been started, why did we not immediately seize this opportunity to bring nearer the goal of genuine political and economic liberty?”

The speech brought a strong echo inside and outside the convention. There was still revolutionary spirit alive—but would it be strong enough to alter a situation that appeared more and more to be developing towards a middle-class republic? In the streets shooting was going on. A state of siege was declared. Troops appeared, the lights went out, the strike spread. But much of the energy was wasted—so many lives sacrificed in vain because the efforts were restricted to a few centres and other parts of the country did not follow suit. Also, the strike movement lacked co-ordination and clarity in its aims.

Of course, it must be admitted that the republic's relations with the victorious nations did much to hamper the boldness of the workers' responsible leaders. The peace negotiations in Versailles made it clear that the Allied powers would not take any notice of the fundamental changes brought about in Germany, although during the war they had appealed to the German people to change their

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government as a condition of fair treatment for a new Germany.

It was in the early morning hours of June 17, 1919, as I was alone in my editorial office in Frankfurt that the text of the peace treaty as dictated by the Allies reached me. My heart skipped beats as I read it. Is it possible—such a blow, such a humiliation to the young republic? Had they forgotten all their promises—or had they fooled us? On top of all the heavy financial and material burdens and the cession of territory was the degradation of the German people by refusal to permit Germany to enter the League of Nations!

What should we do? I knew our readers would expect me to take an immediate stand, to express a clear opinion. I had never felt a heavier responsibility. There was no one to consult but my own conscience. What was the alternative of not signing? Impossible to call the people of Germany to arms for new resistance! The German people definitely wanted peace, were exhausted. Not to sign would mean occupation of the most important territories containing raw materials, intensification of the blockade, unemployment, hunger, the death of thousands, holding back of our war prisoners—a catastrophe which finally would force us to sign still more humiliating conditions. Of course I was also aware of the dangers of accepting the dictated treaty even under protest. It would incite nationalist passions, burden the republic with unbearable conditions, and raise a threat of counter-revolution. Weighing all consequences, I finally decided to advocate signing.

One factor contributed to this decision. In the same month of June a separatist movement had been started in the occupied Rhineland zone under the leadership of Dr. Hans Dorten and had been furthered, if not entirely instigated, by the French military authorities. Could we risk a step that might develop into the dismemberment of the country? So I came out for signing the treaty, aware of all the risks it involved, but hoping that the peoples of the victorious nations might soon become sober and recognize that these terrible mistakes had to be repaired as quickly as possible in the interest of their own countries, of the young German republic, and of world peace. Alas—everybody knows now that this was an illusion. The crime of Versailles had to be paid for by a frightful price. . . .

How many times during these months had I not asked myself the question, has the November revolution been too humane? Will not this spirit of humanity be poorly rewarded by those who can see in a political opponent only the enemy, in a new social order only a menace to their privileges? The long military tradition of a nation leaves deep roots and cannot be destroyed in a short time. It was demonstrated to us in the most ruthless way that we had to deal with brutally cruel enemies. As early as January 15, 1919, the horrible news had reached us of the cowardly murder of two noble idealists, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, our dear comrades who had been seized by army officers and, defenceless prisoners, had been killed. The reactionary army officers—gentlemen in manners but thugs at heart—were too cowardly to answer for their crime, and

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escaped abroad. Probably encouraged by this unpunished act of brutality, another soon followed. On February 21 our friend Kurt Eisner, head of the Bavarian revolutionary government, the poet and dreamer, the man who had stood unflinchingly for democracy, was fatally shot in the streets of Munich by the young Count Arco-Valley, another representative of the philosophy of violence.

The leaders of our movement knew that many of them were threatened by the same fate. But none of them would demand protection. Certainly Hugo Haase, our honest, fearless party president, was among those most hated because he had the courage of his convictions. The agitation against Haase in reactionary circles was extremely vicious and was responsible for the senseless act of a weak-minded man in October, 1919. On his way to the National Assembly, Haase was shot; after a period of great suffering, he died. The German labour movement lost in him one of its best minds, a personality with rare qualities of character, who could find satisfaction only in his devotion to the common good. Haase was wise and poised in deliberations, firm and courageous in his acts. We were deeply afflicted and the German people felt the sad loss. His life was another tribute the Left paid to the reaction—and it was not to be the last.

Completely new tasks require new instruments. We understood that a change in the social order had to be achieved by increasing the responsibility of those who wanted to help build up this new society. Of course, there cannot be permanent revolution in the sense of permanent fighting and interruption of

economic production. However, labour was committed to a change in its social position and functions. Labour representatives in the shops and offices had not only to improve working conditions and wages, but also to be responsible for continuity of production in the factories. We in the Independent Socialist party were aware of the necessity of giving these representatives the legal right to become the deputies of the structural change that was promised by the government in those bloody days of March, 1919.

The government had promised the labour movement a law which would make the shop councils the basic instruments of socialization. It seemed to us an effective way to prevent state bureaucracies from developing in those industries. The National Assembly had had elaborate and heated debates on the bill presented by the government. When it came before the house for a final vote, it seemed to the workers that the promises given them had not been kept. The Berlin trade unions, therefore, called the workers to demonstrate before the assembly when the final discussion began on January 13, 1920. Tens of thousands left their shops and paraded in front of the Reichstag building. At a given moment some tried to enter the building. Immediately the machine-guns of the army detachment which was guarding the building let loose. Many dead and seriously wounded workers fell to the pavement. The profound indignation of the workers of our party reached deep into the ranks of the Majority Socialists as well.

We in Frankfurt, before the bloody events in Berlin, had decided on a similar demonstration. The shooting before the Reichstag building made a protest the

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more imperative. By that time I had a heavier responsibility to carry. Robert Dissmann had been elected president of the Metal Workers Union, and he had been compelled to leave Frankfurt. We had called the workers of Frankfurt for the afternoon of January 15, 1920, to the biggest meeting-hall of the city to protest against the bloodshed and to put forth labour's demands for the shop councils bill. Two hours before the meeting was to begin the police commissioner telephoned to me that the meeting would not be permitted.

"Impossible to call the meeting off at such a short notice, Herr Polizeipräsident," I said. "By now the workers have quit work and they must be marching towards the meeting-place. It is in the interest of peace and order to let it take place. We guarantee an orderly course."

"I'm sorry," came his reply. "The meeting is not to take place."

I rushed to the meeting hall, the Schumann Theatre, a place almost as large as New York's Madison Square Garden. Scarcely had I arrived when the first men from the factories marched up. They came by entire shops, thousands, tens of thousands. But it was impossible to approach the hall. It was occupied by soldiers and police. In front of it machine-guns and barbed wire were set up as if the city were in a state of war. Huge posters warned, "Halt ! Anyone who marches further will be shot." It was provocative to the highest degree. A huge number of workers massed in front of the bayonets. I realized that the minutes of peace might not last long. I understood the awful possibilities and was determined to do everything to

prevent a repetition of the Berlin shooting. But there was no chance to address the masses in order to tell them to return home. The police and soldiers would have acted immediately. I had to make up my mind, and I did it quickly. Marching along the long line of workers standing impatiently and nervously in front of the soldiers and the barbed wire, I whispered to those near me, "Follow me—don't ask where."

And the huge mass of people marched, following me. I led them, after a quarter of an hour, to a large square around a big monument to Bismarck. Quickly I climbed to the top of the monument and addressed them. I explained in a few words the meaning of our demonstration, expressed our protest, and asked the people to disband and go home in order not to furnish any pretext for shooting. While I was pronouncing the last words, I heard the trucks with the soldiers approaching. They were furious that we had fooled them. They did not realize that my action was the only way to avoid bloodshed. They looked for me. I stayed at the square, mingling with the crowd, but they could not find me. Without any justification they fired on us—three dead and many wounded were the result.

That night I did not go home. I knew they would come to arrest me. But the early morning hours found me in the newspaper office. After a few hours of work I happened to move to the window and was surprised to see a crowd in the courtyard in front of our building. I asked one of the employees to inquire about it. After a few minutes he came back and said :

"The police are looking for you. Detectives are in the manager's office. He is telephoning for you, pre-

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tending you are not here. Two detectives are posted at the entrance to the manager's office. You cannot leave without being seen."

"Well, I think I must leave, anyway," I replied. "Please go back to the printing plant and ask one of the girls there to lend me her bonnet and dress."

Soon he came back with the garments. I quickly donned them, walked through the corridor, passing the two detectives with a friendly "Good morning," and entered the printing plant behind the newspaper offices. From there I climbed down to the central heating room in the basement. The manager was informed and kept in contact with me.

Escape once more ! Of course I had to remain hidden, but not necessarily in the central heating room, which I could leave at night. Many friends offered me asylum. I changed it every day. Only the manager and a messenger boy knew where I was. I went on editing the paper while the police were looking for me. After almost a week I was tired of the underground life. Sanitary conditions during such a gypsy existence are not of the best. When the day of the City Council meeting came, I decided to attend. Naturally, the entire city knew that the police wanted to arrest me, and there was great surprise among my colleagues in the council when I appeared. They asked me for an explanation of the events, which I gave them. There was unanimous recognition of the prudence of my behaviour during the demonstration. But the speaker explained that City Council members did not enjoy the privilege of parliamentary immunity, and that he therefore could not protect me. However, should the police enter the room, he would help me to

get out of the predicament. The police indeed came, and I vanished. But the speaker kept his promise. He intervened with the police and obtained a pledge that they would not bother me any longer.

Normal life was not to last very long for me. The counter-revolutionary trends became stronger, and anyone with his ear to the ground could perceive them. Only the republican Minister of Defence, Gustav Noske, seemed not to have the slightest notion of it. And yet it was in his surroundings that the *coup* was brewing.

In the early morning of March 13, 1920, I was at my newspaper desk as usual. As early as six o'clock the telephone bell rang.

"This is the *Volksstimme* [the Majority Socialist newspaper]. We have just received news from Berlin that army officers have revolted there. They have marched into the capital and established a counter-revolutionary government. We must act as quickly as possible."

"Thank you for your call. I will get in touch with my party executives immediately. Together we must call a general strike. Let us meet within two hours."

I mobilized my comrades. Two hours later orders were given to all workers in the city's factories to cease work. We called them to a huge meeting. They came as one man. Although the Independent Socialists had not supported the existing government, headed by Bauer, a Majority Socialist, we did not hesitate a moment to declare a general strike against the army clique that had instigated what later became known as the Kapp Putsch. But we declared to the editors of the *Volksstimme* and the Majority Socialists in

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Frankfurt that the revolution must now proceed to accomplish its full work—end the counter-revolution for ever. The Majority Socialist leaders promised they would do this, and personally they probably meant it.

Meanwhile, the people had become very excited. Headquarters were again established in the Frankfurter Hof. A revolutionary committee, of which I became a member, was formed. Soon clashes occurred between the masses and the police. After a few hours we mourned fourteen dead and more than a hundred wounded. A mass of workers attempted to storm the military barracks—but were repulsed. Machine-guns appeared in the streets, grenades were thrown. Meanwhile, we had called all city employees on strike, and they had responded. Telegraph and telephone centres were occupied by the workers. What would be the attitude of the army detachments of our district? We soon knew. Troops marched into the city. Cannon were pointed at the police headquarters, the Reichsbank, the city's main railroad station, and most of the public buildings. The generals were asked to whom they gave allegiance, to the legitimate government of Bauer—or to the Putsch cabinet of Kapp. They avoided a definite answer.

To my mind the cannon in the city were a very clear reply. I had left the Frankfurter Hof for a moment and had gone to meet some friends at the *Volksrecht* office. While we were debating, a messenger arrived, breathless, from the Majority Socialists.

"You must vanish immediately, Toni Sender. I am sent by the Majority Socialists to tell you that the army rebels are on their way to arrest you. I am ordered to warn you not to stay here a moment longer."

My friends insisted I must immediately go into hiding. It was too late to leave the building by the front door. Passage through the printing plant and into the central heating plant was impossible—nobody had the keys.

"You must climb down the back wall. We shall help you," someone suggested. I agreed. We were on the second floor. I reached the back court safely and then rushed away into hiding. Every two hours I had to change my place of concealment. Our newspaper manager, S. E., helped wonderfully by arranging for new hiding-places. I was too well known in the city. Anywhere some Kappist might recognize and betray me. Despite the strike, the newspapers of the republican parties continued to be published. They were an important arm in the general strike. So I too, had to go on with my newspaper work. We published several issues each day to keep our followers informed.

But a moment came when my friends thought it was no longer safe for me to stay in Frankfurt. Workers who had been arrested by the army and later released came to tell us that a lynch atmosphere had been created against me in the army, that all the military leaders demanded to know my whereabouts. My friends had therefore arranged for me to flee to the territory occupied by the French. A Frankfurt manufacturer offered me his car and chauffeur. I did not want to go—but under the pressure of general insistence, I finally gave in.

Clad as a boy, I sat next to the chauffeur. When he reached the French military post, where a Moroccan soldier was posted, I talked to him in good French

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and he let us pass, although we had no permit. I stayed with party friends, keeping in close contact with the city by telephone, which, fortunately, was in control of the strikers. After a few hours, I could not stand it away from the battlefields, I asked my friends to send the car, and take me back. I felt I was needed. During all these days I had not undressed, had not slept.

When I returned to Frankfurt, I heard of a suggestion to call off the strike, although the danger from the putschists was still strong. In the confusion, the strikers had been called to meetings in Gross-Frankfurt, a centre of theatres and halls, and then the meetings had, at short notice, been called off. I realized that the second notice could not have reached all the strikers in time. The confusion would be fatal to the strike.

"Is somebody going to Gross-Frankfurt to inform those who may show up?" I asked. Nobody was.

"Then I must go to prevent disaster." They tried to dissuade me. I resisted. I must take the chance. When I arrived in the neighbourhood of Gross-Frankfurt, throngs of workers were approaching—of course they did not know of the cancellation. I was glad I had come. Soon such crowds gathered that I asked the manager of Gross-Frankfurt to help me. He did, and with great courtesy. The largest hall had entrances on two sides.

"Would you open the corridor doors for those going in and keep the street entrance closed until I have talked to those gathered in the hall—and then open the street entrance to let them out?" I asked the manager. "If we continue that procedure we

can hold as many brief meetings as necessary to inform all the tens of thousands who are marching here."

The method worked. The procedure had to be repeated twelve times before I had spoken to all those who had come. I told them of the latest events and promised them that the strike would go on until the army had submitted to our control. The workers trusted me, and division within the strike movement was warded off.

Immediately after the meeting I vanished again. Naturally I remained in close contact with the strikers—but I could not attend the committee meetings. The strike had started Saturday morning. The following Wednesday the committee decided to end the strike on Thursday—a decision taken because the army heads had promised to leave the city and withdraw the troops. But on Wednesday night nothing was changed. Cannon were still directed at the banks and public buildings. The workers were furious at their committee. Some knew how to find me and came to ask my advice.

"I cannot issue orders personally, but I fully appreciate your feeling and sympathize with it," I told them. "You are the strikers, the men who make the sacrifices, and you have a right to a voice in this matter. If you feel you cannot end the strike, you must have an opportunity to express yourselves. I suggest you hire a hall. Call a meeting of the strikers' delegates. I am ready to be the chairman of the meeting and to ensure its orderly course. But you must do the talking, and we can then reach a decision. By such a procedure we will avoid a fight in our ranks

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and may still be able to reverse the committee's decision."

They gratefully agreed. The next morning all came to the meeting. I was in the chair. After a few hours of discussion we decided to continue the strike until the army submitted and actually left the town. And the strike went on. . . . Our tactics met with success. We forced the soldiers to leave.

When this was achieved, the strike committee called a mass meeting of the strike leaders to take a formal decision to end the strike. The workers trooped into the hall. A trade-union leader began to address them. They would not listen to him. Another one attempted to speak—with the same result. Some party leaders were no more successful. The meeting seemed to be out of control. Almost desperate, the chairman asked me if I would try to control it. Of course I was ready to try, if they would permit me to propose the tactics to be followed.

I began to speak and somehow succeeded in making myself heard and gaining the workers' attention. I urged the strikers to return to the shops the next day and there vote shop by shop on whether to end the strike. This was unanimously accepted. The trade-union leaders were thankful. The vote was taken the following day and work was resumed by the strikers' own decision.

The strike against the Kapp Putsch was the first victorious general political strike in history. It was a genuine general strike, the people strongly united, industrial and white-collar workers standing together with all state and city officials. The police chiefs who had haunted me a few weeks before now clasped my

hand in appreciation. It was a demonstration of the force those groups could represent if they combined for a common goal. United they could accomplish great things—without the use of violence. Alas, this solidarity was not repeated in the subsequent history of the German republic. Even during the Kapp Putsch, as well as later, the union was more a negative than a positive one. Factory and white-collar workers, as well as public officials, were all opposed to the overthrow of the republic by the Kapp Putschists—but they disagreed on the form of the economic and social structure of the new state. Only the key groups of the workers understood that the republic had to take power away from the Putschists—the Prussian Junkers and the intriguers of the heavy industries, and especially the officers' corps of the army. No revolution can succeed without revolutionizing the military. In no country was this more imperative than in Germany with its old tradition of the army's predominance in civil as well as military affairs.

For me, the Kapp Putsch had one humorous aftermath. A few weeks after it was defeated, I was summoned before a judge to answer an indictment for assault. At first I did not even understand the meaning of the German technical word for my "offence." When I was told that I was indicted for having physically attacked somebody, I burst into laughter. But the summons was in my hands and I had to go to court. When I was brought into the court-room, I asked the judge to read me the entire text of the accusation. He complied with my request. While he was reading, his eyes glanced at me for a moment and he smiled.. I understood. It was comic—I am

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only 5 feet 2 inches in height and here I was accused of having slapped an army officer in the face. The assault was alleged to have occurred on the first day of the Kapp Putsch, in our headquarters at the Frankfurter Hof.

"Of course," said the judge, "I understand that it is not this method of attack you usually use."

"Thank you, your honour. But you will understand that I should appreciate the army's knowing that too. Would you do me the favour of confronting me with the officer whom I am supposed to have slapped in the face? I do not want the story going around after I am elected to the Reichstag, which I certainly shall be within a few weeks. I would then have the privilege of parliamentary immunity. And the atmosphere of hatred against me in the army would persist. I am afraid it would then be impossible to have the matter cleared up. The house probably would not be willing to lift my immunity."

The judge understood and acquiesced. After a few hours an officer entered the room. He was very tall, a giant almost. The judge's eyes met mine. We could scarcely withhold our laughter.

I burst out with the question :

"I am Toni Sender ; do you really pretend I slapped you ?"

The officer was terribly embarrassed. He looked at me, his blood mounting to his face.

"No, it was not this lady," he stammered.

I asked the judge to grant me the right to have this answer published in the barracks and thus end the slander for all time. He agreed.

I am still convinced that the officer never was

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slapped in the face and that the entire story was invented to create a hostile atmosphere against me. The indictment coming shortly before my Reichstag election, the reactionary officers gambled that the incident would never be cleared up. Thus I would have been stamped an enemy of the men in uniform.

VII

A MEMBER OF THE REICHSTAG IN MY TWENTIES

THE elections to the first Reichstag of the German republic were strongly influenced by the experience of the Kapp Putsch. The masses now began to realize the necessity for more fundamental changes. The forces of the past had shown their reactionary, aggressive face and had poorly rewarded the forbearance of the November revolution. Not in all parts of the nation could the Putsch be defeated without a clash of arms. In Westphalia the workers were compelled to use violence against the Putschists. Of course they were not prepared for it, but they had sufficient initiative to beat the Putschists to the army arsenals and to seize the arms of their enemy. Military experience in the World War together with courage and the decision not to be fooled again helped them to triumph over professional soldiers.

When I was asked to go on a lecture tour in Thüringen, immediately after the Kapp Putsch, I found the working classes in that state still deeply resentful of the cruelties committed by the troops and still more by the so-called *Zeitfreiwillige*, young students hired by the army and armed by it for the purpose of terrorizing the workers and farmers. Most of the cruel

murders and barbarous acts were committed by those hired mercenaries, and they certainly contributed to revolutionizing the masses. The reports I was given by eye-witnesses presented a revolting picture indeed.

Soon after my return from Thüringen the electoral campaign began. Robert Dissmann and I were running mates for the Reichstag on the ticket of the Independent Social Democratic party. Robert meanwhile had already left Frankfurt and moved to Stuttgart as president of the Metal Workers Union, an industrial union. Robert had for years led the fight to win this union from its former conservative leadership, and it was his persistence and his remarkable talent for organization that decided the battle. He understood the necessity of having the political fight backed by solidly organized trade unions. Under his leadership the Metal Workers Union reached a membership of a million, the highest membership ever attained by any labour union in the world.

We had a wonderful electoral campaign. With the party visibly on the ascent and with issues involving steps to complete the work of the revolution, the interest of all classes was aroused to a point where our meetings were crowded, inspired, and inspiring. The workers began to flock to us. The best types of our German intellectuals, those who understood the needs of the time, supported us. The signs were promising, and we worked in an atmosphere of confidence and genuine friendship. Biebrich, the town where my parents lived, was part of my constituency. Thus my family had an opportunity to vote for me. However, none of them was interested in my election—they all voted for one or another of my opponents.

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On June 6, 1920, Robert and I became members of the Reichstag together with seventy-nine other members of our party. It was a proud victory. From the twenty-two members we had in the Constituent Assembly at Weimar a little more than a year before, we had climbed to eighty-one members of the first republican Reichstag. It was a victory that confirmed our attitude early in the revolution as opposed to that of the Majority Socialists, namely, not to rush the people to the polls before we had had ample opportunity to lay the foundation for the new republic and to convince the labouring masses and farmers by our deeds that their interests lay with the revolution.

Unfortunately, the Majority Socialists had lost more than we had gained. From more than eleven million voters in 1919 they had fallen to between five and six million in 1920 with 112 members elected out of a total of 466. The workers who had left them and joined us had justly held them responsible for the Kapp Putsch, with which the army had surprised the Majority Socialist Defence Minister, Noske, and for their failure to fulfil the promise of the revolution. The middle-class elements that had flocked to them under the immediate influence of the revolution had gone back to the nationalist parties, which were also among the gainers in the election.

My party in this election had rendered me a special honour : I was put at the head of the national ticket. Germany had a system of proportional representation requiring 60,000 votes for every member to be elected in a constituency. Two neighbouring constituencies could make an agreement to combine for the purpose of utilizing the remaining votes above the last 60,000.

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The total remaining votes went to the national tickets put up by the national executives of the parties. The objective was to have no votes lost and also to send those persons into the Reichstag who were needed there for their special knowledge. These included persons who in some cases were very able legislators without being effective campaigners and speakers. On account of a rather intransigent left wing, our national executive had met difficulties in setting up the national ticket. It so happened that my name was the one on which both groups could agree. I enjoyed the confidence of both because, although I was revolutionary and energetic in defending labour's rights, I also had sufficient practical business sense and a long trade union experience which had taught me to weigh my decisions. To combine boldness and responsibility always had been my endeavour. It was quite unusual for a woman, and a young newcomer in the Reichstag, to head the national ticket. But it helped to make my way in the Reichstag easier and resulted in my being charged from the very beginning with important tasks. I was to remain in the Reichstag for thirteen years.

In later years I have often been asked, especially in the United States : "What did you do to be elected to the Reichstag?" I could only answer, "Nothing at all." I did not ask for it. It was quite natural that Robert and I should be candidates after our years of devotion and leadership, and my position was not disputed. But the office of deputy never seemed to me something highly desirable. The only thing I wanted was a chance to do useful work for the community, for the masses and the nation. Not that I was without

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ambition, but the accent was more on the achievement than on a position of honour.

Very soon my comrades in the parliamentary group charged me, the youngest member of the house, with the task of speaking for the group in the debates on foreign affairs. It was July of 1920. The German delegates had returned from Spa, where they had had a conference with the Allied nations—the first one after the war in which the heads of the German government met members of the English and French cabinets. The points on the agenda besides the question of reparations, which could not yet be settled, were the problems of disarmament and the German delivery of coal to the Allies. The task assigned to me was to engage in polemics against the speakers of the Right.

"Are you very nervous, Toni?" Luise Zietz, member of the party executive and of the Reichstag, came to ask me.

"Not yet," I answered. "I am still waiting for it to come."

But the nervousness did not come. Life had already hardened me. When I started my attack, I immediately met with strong resistance. There were bitter interruptions from the Right. This only stimulated me to further attacks. I declared that sabre-rattling could only hurt German interests by reinforcing the impression in the Allied nations that the old spirit of Potsdam was not yet dead, that German imperialism was still alive.

"My friends and I are for disarmament—but not for the same reason as the Allies," I said. "By German disarmament we want to advance the fight of

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our friends abroad to accomplish the same goal in their countries.”

Alas—it was a hope never realized. Republican Germany did disarm, but the Allied nations never kept their promise to follow suit. In this speech I expressed apprehension that the League of Nations might have the same fate as the famous fourteen points of President Wilson. And I justified this apprehension by showing that when General Degoutte occupied the German cities of Frankfurt and Darmstadt in violation of the Versailles Treaty, the League of Nations took no action.

Finally I strongly attacked Hugo Stinnes, the powerful German industrialist and master of trusts, whose attitude as a German representative at the Spa conference could not have failed to have an unfavourable effect. And I asked why he was not in the house during this debate, as was his duty as a member of the Reichstag ; and why he preferred to attend to his private affairs, negotiating with foreign business men at the Hotel Kaiserhof in Berlin. Throughout my speech the Nationalists interrupted me, and I had a hard fight with them. But I enjoyed it. I appreciated the staunch support given me by the entire Left, led by the veteran parliamentarian and old revolutionary, Georg Ledebour, one of the most forceful speakers of the house.

This maiden speech had an aftermath that was rather embarrassing for me. One member of the Catholic parliamentary groups, Dr. H., wrote an article entitled “ Toni Sender ” which gave a detailed description of my first appearance before the house. It was written in a very friendly tone and was pub-

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lished in almost the entire Catholic press of Germany. A journalist member of my own parliamentary group wrote a similar article in which he voiced exaggerated enthusiasm. Naturally, these writings became the object of gossip in the house, and gave rise to many troublesome jokes. I would have preferred to vanish until it was all forgotten.

What an eventful period of my life was this year 1920! With the adoption of the bill on the shop stewards a completely new task was conferred upon me. We thought the bill unsatisfactory, since it did not fulfil the promises made to the revolutionary masses, but we recognized that it was a beginning. It placed a totally new responsibility upon the active union men in factories and mines. The shop stewards were made not only the trustees of their fellow workers but also the guardians of the common good. They had the duty of opposing measures proposed by the executives of industry when these measures were felt to be inimical to the general welfare of the nation. It was the duty of the employer or his representative to report periodically to the shop stewards on the situation of the enterprise and of the trade, to present and explain to them the balance and the profit and loss account. One or two representatives of the shop council were delegated to sit on the board of directors of each corporation.

We knew that most of the workers were unprepared for this new responsibility. But we were convinced that there was enough intelligence among the labouring classes and that appropriate training would develop capacities that might surprise those employers who considered the law harmless because of the workers'

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ignorance. Robert Dissmann asked me if I was ready to become editor of a *Shop Councils' Magazine* for the metal trades which the Metal Workers Union had decided to publish. I would have to write one or two articles for every issue, recruit the contributors, keep in contact with the shop councils, and explain and discuss all legislation concerning the councils—economic, financial, and social. It would mean hard work, especially in the beginning when all had to be improvised, but the temptation was too great to be withstood. An effort had to be made to show that the workers meant business when they demanded socialization ; to prove that they were able to acquire the knowledge necessary to understand business and shop management and, still more, that they could develop new concepts which would lay the basis for a new social order. The pause in the revolution had to be used to educate the men who would accomplish the revolutionary task in the economic field. My experience in the metal trust, my studies of economics, and my knowledge of the legislative machinery would be helpful, Robert and his colleagues of the Metal Workers Union thought.

Through the entire period of thirteen years during which I worked for the magazine I met with most loyal co-operation from the board as well as from the shop councils. A lasting comradeship developed, based on mutual confidence. Wherever I had to lecture, in any city or town of Germany, my steel worker friends and especially members of the shop councils would be present. Very often we would meet after the lecture to discuss my recent articles in the magazine or problems they had to deal with in their shops

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or unions. This friendship made my life fuller, gave it more meaning. I know that all our common study and experience cannot have been in vain. Of course, accounts in life are not rendered exactly as in business. Often you cannot strike the balance yourself—life in its time, perhaps after your time, will do it. I now have steel and metal worker friends all over the world—we remain a brotherhood bound to each other by a common struggle and common ideas. When in 1935 I went to Cleveland, Ohio, for a lecture, how great was my surprise to have as my chairman an old friend, Gustav Dabringhaus, who had been employed at the Krupp factory in Essen and who had since become a prosperous American citizen. He introduced me to the gathering with the following story :

“It was in the spring of 1920. The political waves were high in the Ruhr district. The Metal Workers Union had increased its membership in Essen from 5,000 in 1918 to 35,000. Many young, wild, and inexperienced elements were among them. The Independent Socialists dominated the union’s board. All of a sudden they found guns somewhere in the Krupp factory. The workers promptly smashed them under the steam hammers. Nevertheless, the rumour of a planned counter-revolution spread. The shop chairman decided on a protest strike. The brothers of the extreme Left wanted to push the protest strike into a political strike. In the beginning only 25 per cent. of all workers participated in it.

“The government sent troops to Essen. For the first time we saw Noske guards. More and more workers broke away from the strike. The local board

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of the union wanted to terminate it in some way. But the shop chairmen as a body did not want to give up, and it was decided that a membership meeting should make a decision. The masses of the strikers gathered in the North Park Hall, Altenessen. More than 2,000 men, mostly steel workers, filled the hall, expecting as main speaker a member of the national board of the union. The extreme leftists went around warning : ' Don't let them fool you ! '

" Suddenly a patrol with steel helmets and guns penetrated the hall. A row developed, some cowards jumped out of the open windows. The lieutenant gave a warning signal, and Wilhelm Steinhauer as chairman opened the meeting. He declared that it was ridiculous to be afraid of the soldiers at a moment when they were prepared to discuss a continuation of the strike. Then to this restless assembly, and to the great surprise of all, he introduced a delicate young woman who appeared all the more incongruous as she stood next to the tall Wilhelm. The extremists smiled furtively. The steel workers sat down and looked disconcertedly into their glasses of beer. What can this young person have to tell us ?—and, besides, we shall scarcely be able to hear her. But soon calm was established.

" Toni Sender appeared from behind the much too big speakers' table and stood next to it, her hands on her hips. She spoke clearly and penetratingly of political actions, of economic struggles, and of economic strikes with direct demands, strikes which sometimes may last long. But the political strike in most cases is spontaneous, she said. It could last only a limited time, and that was the only way to develop

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it into mass action. Was there any chance to develop the present strike into a mass action? A man who interrupted her was silenced with the remark that one should not see the world revolution in every bursting bubble. The restless mass of steel workers had become silent and attentive. They followed the clear, logical conclusions and trusted this brave little woman. By an overwhelming majority they voted to end the political strike before it was entirely lost."

Thus ran the account of my friend in Cleveland. I had forgotten the incident and at first listened to his story as if it did not concern me.

My collaboration with the metal and steel workers became closer and more intimate. I took part also in their activities in the international field. I accompanied the union's delegation to the international metal workers convention in Copenhagen as an interpreter, but on my own account, at the same time reporting the congress for the German labour press. It was an interesting task because I was permitted to go beyond the interpreter's duty and to help to bring the different national delegations to a better understanding. It was but a short time after the war and misunderstandings had not yet been entirely removed, especially between the Germans and the French and Belgians. The fact, however, that on the German side there were a number of anti-war men and that the French delegation included A. Merrheim, who had been one of the most courageous opponents of the World War, made the approach much easier. Merrheim was one of those few Frenchmen who dared to attend one of the international anti-war conferences in Switzerland during the war; his was a superior

character and an unusually independent mind. He could be stubborn if necessary, but his talent and broad-mindedness certainly contributed to rebuilding the "Iron International"—the International Metal Workers Federation—on a more solid and effective basis. I made new ties of friendship also with the other foreign delegates, especially those of Britain, Belgium, and Czechoslovakia. They were ties which proved to be of lasting value.

The International of the metal workers became part of my homeland. I attended most of their subsequent conventions and became one of their "old guard," though I had not much of a past as a "metal worker" to legitimize me. While in Copenhagen I was, of course, expected to spend my leisure time with my German colleagues. The Germans, however, were an awfully serious group, almost gloomy. I felt that our work would benefit by some relaxation. So I went to the Austrian delegation and asked them to join us. How different these Austrians were! Gay and cheerful, they took things more easily. To inaugurate our alliance I asked all the delegates, young and old, to come with me to the Tivoli Garden and to be good sports—to go to all foolish places from "Russian mountains" to the Tottering Dancing. They promised. The experiment proved a great success. For a few hours we forgot our trouble, became silly, and buried our animosities.

Too soon, seriousness claimed us again. With the German delegation, I was boarding the steamer to return home when the French delegate came to tell me that he had just received a very important document, Moscow's twenty-one conditions, the stipula-

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tions of the Third International for parties wishing to affiliate. Merrheim knew I was interested in and had worked for the unification of world labour on a decent basis acceptable to all. He as well as I had striven for a union of the western with the eastern workers. The Independent Social Democratic party had sent delegates to Moscow to discuss this problem with the Russian leaders. They were received in Moscow like subordinates. The Russians seemed to feel themselves the dictators not only of Russia but of world labour as well. Unity was possible only if we submitted to the twenty-one conditions which Merrheim had just received and shown to me. I grasped them with great excitement and read them breathlessly. What impossible presumption! My reaction was immediate. "Unacceptable!" I always understood the struggle of labour as a *fight for freedom*, not as the submission of zealots to some superior command, a central body far in the East, in Moscow, directing the destinies of the western, perhaps of the entire world labour movement.

Immediately upon my arrival in Germany, I told Merrheim, "I shall sit down and write a pamphlet opposing most energetically this unworthy challenge." Robert Dissmann and Merrheim, both genuine Socialists, fully approved of my attitude. I agreed with Robert's suggestion that I go to the Harz Mountains for a few days to be undisturbed in my writing. Only Robert was to know my whereabouts.

Robert knew a place, isolated in the woods, named Romkerhalle. There I went. The plain mountain house stood in front of a waterfall. At the back the mountain creek roared day and night. The Harz

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Mountains are like a huge temple with high straight fir trees as columns. Because of the time of the year I was the only guest in the house, and I seldom met a human being on my short climbing excursions. I had quiet hours to think over the problems involved in the Moscow document and to make up my mind. These serious reflections led me to condemn even more severely the challenge of Moscow. It could lead only to loss of dignity and independence for our movement. It would not even be the dictatorship of the working classes but rather the dictatorship over them of a clique of bureaucrats. This was the idea I expressed in the title of my booklet. Once the idea was clearly conceived, I sat down and wrote without looking up.

But my expectation of being alone for a few days was an illusion. I had not finished my writing when, unexpectedly, a visitor was announced. It was a delegate from Braunschweig who had learned my address from Robert. The movement in that state was hard pressed by the adherents of Moscow. Those opposed to this trend had sent him to see Robert in Stuttgart and asked him to locate me. I had not yet had a rest and needed it badly. But my comrade insisted so strongly, arguing that it was my duty to help them save the organization, that I consented to go with him at once.

It was a heated and very close fight—but I won the battle there for our friends. And from that day on I had to go from state to state to oppose speakers who wanted to split our party and lead it into the Communist ranks and to submission to the Moscow central committee. It was a necessary, although an

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unsatisfactory, fight. Our opponents did not speak on the issue. They glorified the Russian revolution—which everybody was ready to protect—and did their best to slide away from the conditions that the Russians had fixed for the privilege of combining all labour forces with theirs. I was successful in many places, once having to speak for three and a half hours to convince a reluctant majority in a state convention. It was a grand battle—a fight for freedom of thought and decision in the labour movement and in society, and I have never regretted having led it in Germany.

But it was the saddest time in my life. We used all our strength to fight each other in the labour movement while neglecting the much more necessary common struggle against the growing influence of the dark forces of the past and the beginnings of a more modern and a more sinister reaction. The days of the Halle convention of the Independent Social Democrats of October, 1920, still seem to me like a nightmare. We knew the Moscow followers had the majority. Most of them were as though in a state of intoxication, happy and unreasoning. Arguing with them was therefore without avail. They had brought their followers in the city of Halle, where they were in the majority, to the balconies. Insults flew down on us from the very first day.

Then came the sensation of the convention. Grigoryi Zinoviev, the secretary of the Third International, came in person to make certain that the most promising revolutionary party of Germany would be disrupted. Zinoviev arrived like an operatic prima donna. Well-nourished and vain, he entered the hall triumphantly followed by an entourage of young ad-

mirers. But at the same time, almost unnoticed by the majority, another Russian entered the hall, a well-known and deserving veteran of the Russian and international labour movement whom I had met before in Paris. It was Martov, the theoretician of the Russian Social Democrats, who had spent years in czarist jails and who had suffered the same fate at the hands of the Bolsheviks during the past years for his stand in favour of social democracy. Finally he had been exiled from his homeland. He was sick, a shadow of a man, near death from tuberculosis contracted in jail.

A glance at these two men was enlightening. Here the representative of the then ruling caste, happy, radiant, well fed—there the one who personified the oppressed, weak and sick, but with a fine spiritual face indicative of his refusal to surrender his faith. For although Martov and his party had made mistakes, there was no reason whatsoever to doubt their honest revolutionary spirit.

Grigoryi Zinoviev started to speak and went on for four hours. He declaimed in a somewhat broken German which only heightened the effect of his talk. A demagogue of high calibre, he seemed to judge the majority of his audience well. He spoke such primitive language that at one moment I could not contain myself any longer and shouted at him : " We are not muzhiks." He talked of the Russian revolution and its enemies but not of the twenty-one conditions for affiliation to the Third International.

Someone had to reply. We selected Dr. Rudolf Hilferding, chief editor of our Berlin newspaper, *Freiheit*, and famed as a theoretician. Usually he is not

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a good speaker, for he has little of the orator about him. But if he is provoked and convinced of the importance of the issue, he can rise to great intellectual heights and make a deep impression on thinking people. However, the majority was not of that type, at least not during this period, and Hilferding could not influence the decision to be taken. But his three-hour speech in Halle remains an important historical document. Hilferding attacked the problem which Zinoviev had ignored. He emphasized that the German labouring classes must achieve their liberation for themselves and that they could not assign their thinking to any outside body. He charged that it was not a labour policy that was being followed in Germany but a policy of factional interests. The only lesson to be learned from that experience, therefore, was no further split! One must stop gutter competition in radicalism. Zinoviev had called the Amsterdam trade union international a "yellow" international, but he had also expressed thanks for the boycott on the shipping of war material to the enemies of Soviet Russia. He thus expressed his thanks to the same men whom he insulted. For he called these men "more dangerous than the White Guards", "murderers of the proletariat", showing in so doing an appalling lack of moral feeling.

Hilferding in opposing terrorism gave the following definition: "the use of violence by a government for the purpose of frightening persons who supposedly could commit an offence but have not yet committed it; we call terror the arrest of brothers, sisters, mothers, and children, all this ugly policy of hostages, and we oppose especially the terrorism used to suppress every

free expression of opinion among the working classes. We are opposed to declaring invalid elections whose result does not please the government." Hilferding predicted that the use of terrorism would make the party a sect and lead to the apathy of the masses, and to the spread of official corruption in the state.

Did Zinoviev hear again the words of this prophecy as he stood before the firing squad only sixteen years later? And did he then feel the power of the motto with which Schopenhauer, the German philosopher, had sent out his work and which had been recalled to the convention : *Magna vis veritatis et praevalebit* (Great is the power of truth and it will prevail).

The resolution that opposed affiliation to the Third International through submission to the twenty-one conditions declared it would mean abandonment of the party's independence, demolition of the Amsterdam trade union international, the expulsion of respected comrades, the splitting of the party and paralysis of its capacity for action. It was signed by Ledebour, Rosenfeld, myself, and others.

When, after the vote was taken and the irrational had triumphed, I left the Halle convention hall with my friends to gather together what was left of a very promising young party, I felt deeply the great catastrophe that had occurred. The splitting and weakening of the only realistic and independent revolutionary party in Germany could lead only to the encouragement of reaction. The rule of the irrational always threatens disaster. What did it matter that after a short time those who had led in the surrender to Moscow's dictates became sober and left the Communist party? The damage was done !

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I knew a new chapter in the history of German labour had begun. The split was worse than a defeat.

However, there was no time for lamentations—the fight had to go on. A new threat appeared, the splitting of the trade union International by breaking away some of the national trade unions and getting them to join the Moscow Red Trade Union International. I had collaborated with the so-called “Amsterdam International,” had attended its first post-war convention in London, had helped as an interpreter when it was rebuilt, after its destruction by the war, on solid foundations. It had efficient leaders in Edo Fimmen and Jan Oudegeest, men whose friendship and character I appreciated. Should the work of destruction go on? The national board of the Metal Workers Union sent me to the most crucial districts to lead the fight to keep the economic organizations of labour intact despite the disruption on the political front. It was a really hard job. One had to deal with fanatics and in some places with toughs, especially in the harbours on the coast where I was sent to speak. In this fight I did not suffer a single defeat—except to my health. Many meetings were held in unventilated places, crowded by thousands and filled with thick clouds of smoke. Usually I would have to speak and argue into the early morning hours. But in the end Amsterdam won over Moscow in the German metal and steel workers’ unions.

While this fighting had to be carried on, it became necessary to rebuild the Independent Social Democratic party, which had been seriously disrupted by the Moscow split. Efficient and successful work in the Frankfurt City Council became more important

than ever, and at the same time I was expected to do my full duty in the Reichstag and on its committees. I had been elected a member of the committee on foreign affairs—of which I was to remain a member until 1933—and of the committees on economics and on social legislation. During this difficult period of readjustment the work was intense, particularly for a young person who was not inclined to take things easy. My physician was also a member of the Frankfurt City Council, although not of my political group. He observed me growing thinner with every month and warned me to drop my work for a few weeks. Undernourishment in the last years of the war, overwork during the revolution, lack of sleep, and an abundance of worry all combined to undermine my health. But this period seemed so decisive for the German republic that I did not want to stop working—until I broke down after a meeting in my constituency, apparently with an inflammation of the nerves. My friends, among them my physician, were greatly disturbed. I became weaker and weaker, was sent to a hospital and then to a sanatorium. It did not help much.

When the formation of the so-called Vienna International (a Socialist and labour international opposed to Moscow dictatorship as well as to opportunist reformism) was decided on, I was made a delegate to its founding convention. I gave up hospital and sanatorium and travelled to Vienna. Unity of the labouring masses, nationally as well as internationally, seemed to me the highest goal. The International Working Union of Socialist Parties, as the Vienna International was called, made no pretension to being

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considered *the* International. It was aware that no real and effective International existed as long as division continued between the second and third Internationals and while some important parties remained unaffiliated with either of them.

Among the parties assembled in Vienna besides the German Independent Socialists were the French Socialists, the then still influential British Independent Labour Party, and the strong Austrian and Swiss Socialist parties. Otto Bauer, the Austrian leader, was from the beginning the most influential intellectual leader of the Vienna union. For a short time Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Austrian republic, Bauer had led his party into opposition to the government. He was loved by the masses of Austrian workers and hated by the Catholic leaders, especially by the Chancellor, Monseigneur Ignaz Seipel. Bauer was of superior intelligence, sarcastic and biting in discussion, a scholar in social and economic sciences, and an artist in formulating his ideas in speeches and writings. We became close friends and remained in touch with each other until his death in 1938, after his bitter experience of forced emigration to Czechoslovakia and later to France.

I appreciated Bauer's advice, but I often meditated on the merit of assigning to scholars the tasks of statesmen, a consideration that occurred to me also in connection with Dr. Rudolf Hilferding, the theoretician of the German movement and later twice Minister of Finance for short periods. Scholars seldom are men of quick, realistic, and shrewd action, such as is needed in moments of emergency. And the central European nations in the first post-war period seldom

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left the stage of emergency. But government needs such men as advisers and experts. As such we could not dispense with them.

We decided in Vienna to set up the International Working Union for the purpose of labouring for international unity on a programme broad enough to form a basis of discussion. Alas—the goal has not been reached even at the present day. Negotiations with Moscow's representatives were begun twice, and I took part in one of them—but they were to no avail. The Third International was not prepared to acknowledge the independence and freedom of the national organizations. As a reaction to this attitude, other parties were driven to a bitter feeling toward the Russians, leading almost to implacable enmity.

VIII

ENFORCED RETREAT

AFTER the work in Vienna was done, I suffered a new breakdown in 1921. Tuberculosis of the lungs was the physician's diagnosis. Again I was forced into hospital and sanatorium—first in Austria, later in Germany. Instead of the hoped-for improvement, I grew worse. My physician friend in Frankfurt insisted that I must go to Davos in Switzerland, to be healed in that sheltered village high in the mountains where the sun's rays reflected from the glaciers have a miraculous curative effect.

"I can't afford to do it," I told Dr. N. "Although my income in Germany is high, the depreciated German currency amounts to little when exchanged for the Swiss franc. Let me go on with my work and use up all my strength until it is all over."

"I must be quite frank with you," he replied. "Possibly you would not die soon. You might have to go through a long period of sickness, finally becoming dependent on others."

That was the last alternative I would accept. I talked the matter over with Robert. He promised that while in Switzerland I could continue my editorial work for the *Shop Councils' Magazine*, and that he would provide me with all books, documents, and

materials needed to keep me informed. I never questioned for a moment the fact that I had to go on working while trying to recover. On my trip to Davos I stopped with Robert in Lucerne to assist the Metal Workers International, once more in convention. I served as an interpreter despite my illness, which now was accompanied by fever. This was my last contact with the labour movement before banishment to the solitude of the Swiss mountains for approximately a year.

My physician in Davos, Dr. F. Bauer, who soon became an understanding friend, found me seriously threatened by the sickness. He ordered a complete rest, in bed in the open air. A sure instinct advised me not to go to one of the huge sanatoriums, those "Magic Mountains" where you acquire too friendly a relationship with your ailment and become captivated by an atmosphere of idleness hidden behind a veil of inspiring conversation and philosophizing. I saw such cases later, young men and women taken away from active life before they had established close ties with it, unable to conceive the idea that eventually they would have to go back to workaday activity where they would no longer be the objects of special care and attention. Subconsciously, they came to fear the curing of their malady—a cure which might render them no longer more interesting than an average person. They came to fear becoming again an anonymous person in the crowd.

With the help of Socialist friends in Switzerland I found a room with a private veranda in a small pension, where I would be undisturbed. My physician, ordering a very strict cure, understood that I had to work

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in bed for two reasons. First of all, to keep in close contact with the life and problems of my comrades, and, also, to earn the cost of my cure. Luckily enough I was by then known abroad and could write articles for foreign magazines, many of them for Swiss publications. Together with my work for the German newspapers and periodicals I managed to get along.

The idea of being excluded from active life for an unlimited period of time at first seemed appalling to me. How grateful did I soon become! After such an extremely tense life as I had led in the immediate past, it was good and even necessary to have an opportunity for meditation and a calm survey of the past. Most of the time I was alone with my books and my documents. My bed stood on the veranda, the view open to the snow-crowned mountains glittering in the strong rays of a shining sun. The scenery was grandiose. The quiet was emphasized by the harmonious sound of the cowbells on the Alpine pastures and by the plodding of horses when snow, several feet high, had covered all the roads.

From time to time Mo or Hanna would come to see me. Both, former patients at Davos, were now established citizens of the place. Mo, a very able lawyer, a tall, handsome chap looking like Hercules, had been sick for years and had done most of his studying in bed. He was a well-educated Socialist, eager to exchange ideas and experiences. Hanna, his wife, had gone through a similar period of suffering and become a highly refined person. She was still of delicate appearance but was courageous and had a fine sense of humour. Comradeship between us developed into a warm friendship. They were natur-

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ally deeply interested in the German revolution and would inquire about the reasons for its having come to a standstill.

I tried to answer them.

"Until now my political activity has been inspired by the assumption that Germany was still in a revolutionary phase and that our tactics therefore had to push in the direction of great fundamental change. But we had to deal with a people not accustomed to democracy or the use of liberty, with a nation which had become free only after the World War. Our people had no abundance of spontaneity. The middle classes to a large extent disliked political activity. They resented being stirred up. Many so-called intellectuals declared with pride that they were not at all interested in, and were therefore ignorant of, politics. The desire for rest, politically, was partly born out of the exhaustion, the suffering, and the starvation of the war years. Lack of spontaneity as a trait in the German character, a great fatigue from the exhaustion of the great struggle, and no tradition of direct responsibility in government were unfertile soil for a successful revolution.

"The Allied nations gave the nation no fair chance to make the young republic a success. The national self-respect was continuously humiliated. Germany was treated as a defendant. The nonpolitical-minded stratum of German society interpreted this treatment as a sign that the Weimar democracy was an inadequate system, and they compared it with the past—the proud empire with the Kaiser at the head. An atmosphere of dissatisfaction and resentment could not fail to develop.

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“What will come will depend upon our capacity to learn from the past. Our task is by no means hopeless—if the German working masses are not revolutionary, they are people with the most marvellous spirit of sacrifice. What they need are bold and clear-sighted leaders. Leadership there must be in any organized society. And democracy needs men and women with great vision, boldness, character, and courage. Where an autocracy uses force, democracy is bound to use superior intelligence. If we want to win for the cause of democracy and social and economic justice, we must create unity. Unity, and also agreement on some major changes and the tactics to be used for their achievement. We must ban the narrow-mindedness and petty quarrelling in which some Germans excel. And we must show that we are without personal ambition but full of ambition for the creation of a better world. Do you not agree with us that such a policy must meet with understanding abroad and win us the support of the labouring classes of the world to give to a free Germany her proper place in the community of nations?”

Meanwhile, as I spoke, it had become late in the evening. When Mo left me, the moon stood bright in a wide, dark sky, wrapping the majestic mountains with their glaciers in a shining silver sheet—a sight of sublimity and calm, of a majestic, almost immutable, cosmic world, contrasting with the restlessness and insecurity of the world human beings have made.

Though a year had passed since I had dropped out of active life, I continued my close contacts with people and events. Only rarely would one or another fellow sufferer come to see me. They were persons who had

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been "studying" at Davos "university" for a number of years. They told me how impossible it was for them to return to life down below. People there would not understand them. Some of them had come to Davos at a very early age, had there met interesting personalities. They had had plenty of time to discuss and talk and to build up the impression that they led an unusually interesting life. How could they ever become reconciled again to a trivial, everyday life in a small town or even in a city as an ordinary person? It did not occur to them that all this exciting talk and debating on a mountain-top was anything but real life. I tried to make them understand that, to help them as best I could—but I doubt whether I was in any way successful. Yet to observe them was a decided warning, although the danger, for me, was not a very grave one.

"Would you be ready to become editor-in-chief of the *Freiheit*?" was the question asked of me one day in a letter from Wilhelm Dittmann, a member of our party's central committee. I was most surprised. The *Freiheit* was the central newspaper of the Independent Social Democratic party. It had been edited since its foundation by Dr. Rudolf Hilferding. Robert had already written to me that the Berlin membership, as well as a number of leading people in the party, had become dissatisfied with the paper's attitude, considering it too reformistic. They had held several conferences of the central bodies of the party and as a result of these, Dittmann said, they had decided to offer me the editorship.

It assuredly was a great honour for a young woman and naturally a temptation. But I resisted. It was

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never that kind of ambition that dictated my decisions. Certainly I love to see worth while things done and to share in the doing. Who receives the credit for the accomplishment, however, has not much importance. I considered the implications of the offer and decided that under the circumstances I should not accept it. I was not yet cured. Being of an independent mind, I knew there would arise issues on which my attitude might be antagonistic to that of other party leaders. Would I be physically strong enough to fight things through? Furthermore, I had never been a factional adherent and did not want to become one. Better, therefore, not to be blinded by honour and to make a clear decision. No—I do not want to become the editor!

Robert, with whom I had discussed my reasons, and who would have liked to see me at the head of the paper, finally agreed with me. He even took two days in the midst of all his terrific work to come to see me in Davos. Here, as everywhere he went, his very kind, humorous Rhenish way won him the hearts of all those he met. Alas—his visit was too short and passed too quickly for us to discuss all those problems that had preoccupied me in the months of my solitude. But I was so glad I could be useful to my friend, even during my illness, by making some studies for him and for the movement, thus helping him to draft motions and courses of action.

Yet I was impatient to go back to the lowlands. Dr. Bauer, my physician and friend, was understanding. Of course, I wanted to regain my health, knowing what strain the normal activity of those restless days would again put on everyone. The will to recover

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had helped to accelerate my improvement. Towards the spring of 1922 my doctor declared he would permit me to leave for the Tessin and after a short stay there to go on and try normal life again.

Have you ever been for a very long time in a region where your eye falls perpetually on blank white—where the roads, the roofs of the houses, the mountains, all that you can see is as if wrapped in a white winding sheet of snow? Hedges and fences vanish—it is almost as if the borders of private property have disappeared. At first you enjoy it immensely—it is something so unusual. How tired of it I had become, I discovered only when, from the train which brought me down to the valley, I suddenly saw the first piece of green meadow. It seemed almost a miracle. So deeply green, so cheerful, so expressive. It was only this unforgettable joy that made me realize how for months I had been hungering for some colour other than the eternal white.

Erich and Nettie, very dear friends, awaited me in the Tessin and made my transition to the world of the healthy as pleasant as possible. From their pretty little home at the top of the hill in Orselina I had an enchanting view of the Lago Maggiore. All around us the most colourful flowers sprouted in the blessed spring days. I had to learn to walk again, but soon I was able to take long strolls about the hills and along the lake with their lavish and changing colours. Erich, a capable physician, cared for me well and permitted me to go on a trip through Italy. In Milan I met Robert. Both of us were to go to the Rome convention of the International Federation of Trade Unions. In the short time that was left before

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the conventions opened we enjoyed the beauty of the sunny country and its ancient art and architecture. We went as far as Naples, Capri, and Pompeii, and our imagination wandered back to those days when a privileged caste lived there in the midst of the most exquisite beauty of nature and the most refined works of art—until an angry god, hurling burning lava from Vesuvius, made a cruel end to all and buried what had been almost paradise.

Fate was not quite so cruel to us, but already we could hear in Rome the distant rumble of another thunder—signs of the approaching pestilence of fascism. The Rome trade union convention was to be the last free congress held in Italy. I was asked by Edo Fimmen, one of the International's two secretaries, to act as an interpreter in French, English, and German, as I had done at previous conventions. I could not refuse Edo—it was a pleasure to work with him. As long as he was the International's secretary he gave the movement colour and vivacity. He is a broad-shouldered giant, looks like a viking, and has something of the character of those bold navigators. Master of many languages, he was a revolutionary as well as an organizer, rare qualities that fitted him for his office. But he also had a slight touch of the adventurer—which later was to create difficulties for him. (When I saw him again in 1938, in the United States, I realized that the years had taken away from him this latter trait, but he has remained a fresh, unceremonious fellow wholly devoted to the labour movement.)

Fimmen showed in the Rome convention the same driving force he had displayed in London more than two years before. The effects of the World War were

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still very strongly felt at this time. Everyone knew what a repetition of such a catastrophe would mean for the working classes. On the other hand, the labour movement had become too strong to permit itself to adopt resolutions it would not be able to carry through. It was a serious, sometimes heated debate that preceded adoption of a declaration that the international labour movement would call a general strike if need be to prevent another world war.

In London in 1920 the Italian delegates had been impatient and more revolutionary than those of any other country. The situation had changed somewhat by the spring of 1922, shortly before Mussolini's black-shirt march on Rome. As usual, the convention was also to offer its delegates some recreation. The Italian comrades, therefore, had prepared an excursion to the famous Tivoli. When the delegates gathered to start on the trip, they were compelled to wait for a rather long time. "What is the cause of the delay?" we asked. For some time we could not get an answer. Finally they told us.

"We do not yet know if we can go to Tivoli. Last night there were riots between the Fascists and the workers. One Fascist has been killed. There is still some excitement and we do not know whether we can let you go there."

Again we had to wait. Finally word came that we would go not to Tivoli but to another place instead. I felt disappointed by the decision. Once it had been decided to go to Tivoli, the delegates of a labour convention should not have been afraid to go, notwithstanding possible incidents. We should not have given the impression of being scared. But it did not

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help—we were not to go to Tivoli. Was it an omen? The Tivoli incident gave me food for thought, but when I left Rome I did not foresee that things would change so quickly, that this was to be our last visit to a democratic Italy for a long time.

IX

RETURN TO THE STRUGGLE

DURING my stay in Davos I had exchanged ideas with Robert many times on the issue of industrial unionism. The Metal Workers Union stood for it, not only because it was itself an industrial union and the largest in the world, but also because it was composed of extremely progressive elements. We were striving for industrial unionism not only because that form of organization made it easier to organize the modern mass-production industries, but also because we saw new tasks given to labour for which they had to create the necessary tools. How could the workers participate in the administration of an industry without learning to deal not only with problems of their trade but also with those of the entire industry? They must broaden their interests and their knowledge. They must learn to understand the general economic needs, what was wrong with existing methods of management, and how to organize them for the welfare of the people of the nation. How could we time and again demand socialization of the key industries without preparing the instruments for the workers' part in its realization? In this respect, industrial unionism, as we saw the need of it in Germany in 1922, differed from the aims of

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the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which now functions in the United States. We saw the industrial unions as vehicles of socialized industry, not merely as an organizing technique.

As in most other countries, Germany's labour movement represented craft as well as industrial unions. The old craft union members had such a strong loyalty to their organizations that it was hard to bring them to make any concessions. The prominent leaders of the Federation of Labour favoured the craft unions. Before the convention of the federation convened in Leipzig in June, 1922, we had worked intensely for the victory of our ideas. I attended the convention as a journalist for the Independent Socialist press and therefore also for the famous *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, one of the oldest and most respected labour dailies in the country. But I had promised Robert to help him, especially during the time he was detained in committee meetings. Fortunately, the industrial unionist delegates recognized my right to take part in the discussions within their caucus even though I was not a delegate. Our group became stronger during the debates, at least partly because of Robert's excellent exposition of our point of view. Could the opposition deny that a great number of skilled craftsmen as well as skilled or semi-skilled labourers, although employed by the same employers, were divided into several unions, while on the side of ownership there was a single, unified directorship? Could they deny that the form of labour organization had changed very little during a period when the most rapid transformation had taken place in industry? What had labour done to meet the

concentration of capital into huge single concerns and combines?

"If you want to support efficiently the work of the shop councils, you can do it only on the basis of the industry. We have widened the interest of labour from their own working and living conditions to an understanding of the implications of their industry as a part of the national economy. The principle should be: in every shop only one union," Robert told the convention. He was the most applauded speaker.

But the craft unionists would not give up so easily. They were furious about my critical articles in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, which every delegate found each morning on his chair. One morning after the opening of the convention the chairman launched a bitter attack on me—knowing that as a journalist I was in no position to answer him. But the bulk of the delegates, no matter what their political affiliation, came to my defence and insisted that the chairman had no right of censorship over the press and that I was fully entitled to write editorially my personal views whether they liked them or not. But that did not prevent the presiding officer of the next session from repeating the admonition to me, although in a somewhat milder form. The rebuke was sweetened by the chairman, old August Brey, president of the powerful Factory Workers Union. When I returned to my seat after a recess, I found he had left me a package of chocolate. The kind old man wanted to show me that he desired no enmity between us.

Before the discussion was terminated by the adoption of the decisive paragraph of Robert Dissmann's motion, the news burst on the convention of a new

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attack upon the republic. Dr. Walter Rathenau, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had given up his position in the great electrical concern A.E.G. to place his talent at the disposal of the republic, had been assassinated on his way to his office. In full daylight, while driving in his open car, he had been shot by three young men who were under the influence of illegal, reactionary organizations. One of them was a Nazi. Rathenau was a man of the bourgeoisie, head of one of the biggest corporations of the country. But the labour convention boiled at the news of the cowardly murder of this genuine idealist. Everyone knew who were really responsible for the murder—those men of the parties of the Right who had viciously expressed their hatred of this statesman's spoken and printed word. Rathenau had worked devotedly for improvement of the German republic's position on the international scene. But these men of the Right hated the republic. They deeply resented the influence of the labouring people in a democratic state, and the workers understood that the shots which killed the capable and idealistic minister were also aimed at them.

The convention was immediately adjourned as a sign of deep concern and indignation. Many delegates gathered around us, and we started to draft a motion which would draw the necessary conclusions from these warning shots. The first resolution was for a general strike all over Germany. Mass meetings were to support our demands for the protection of the republic, and for the elimination of all enemies of the republic from the administration, the army, and the courts. The convention also directed a call

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to all union members to be ready to defend the young republic with their lives. The Leipzig workers immediately organized a mass demonstration on the Augustus-Platz, in the centre of the city, and asked me to be one of their speakers. The huge square was black, so densely stood the masses who seemed to be ready to follow any call. It was a stormy day and it was hard to speak against the wind. We had no loud-speaker. However, a solemn silence was maintained so that our voices might better carry against space and storm. It was one of the most impressive demonstrations of those years rich in mass gatherings. When a few days later I was called to address a similar mass meeting in the open air in Frankfurt, I again had the feeling : These German workers, in spite of so much suffering and so many disappointments, are again ready to sacrifice to the limit in order to establish a genuine democracy with social and economic justice. They fully understood the significance of the murder of Dr. Rathenau.

When those of us at the trade union convention who were members of the Reichstag rushed back to Berlin we met not only great excitement but a completely new situation. Realizing the danger to the life of the republic, the parliamentary group of the Independent Socialists declared its readiness for closer co-operation with the other Socialist groups. It agreed to enter the government in order to carry through the demands of the trade union convention. The head of the government at that time was the Catholic, Dr. Josef Wirth, Rathenau's close friend. Whoever heard his inspired, flaming speech in the Reichstag, in which he accused those responsible for

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the crime, never forgot it. He concluded with the famous words, "The enemy stands at the right," his finger pointing to the right of the Reichstag. But alas! Dr. Wirth's statesmanship did not keep pace with his great oratory. A courageous cleaning out of the republic's enemies could not be carried through in alliance with the German People's party (*Deutsche Volkspartei*), the party of heavy industry with its reactionaries and monarchists. When the offer of the Independent Socialists to collaborate with the cabinet of Dr. Wirth became known, the answer of the Catholic or Centre party (*Zentrum*) was in the negative. The German People's party even demanded extension of the cabinet towards the Right! Dr. Wirth, instead of putting before his own Catholic party his clear decision to collaborate with all republicans, including all democratic labour parties, gave up the idea of extending his government to the Left.

After this weak attitude the chapters that followed did not surprise those of us who realized that the Rathenau murder had created a new revolutionary situation. There had appeared the possibility that an immediate appeal to the electorate would send to the Reichstag a majority more likely to take drastic measures for the safety of the republic. But no such appeal was made. Instead, it was left to the Reichstag, as it was then constituted, to answer the attack on the republic. This it did by drafting a "law for the protection of the republic" and creating a special Central Court for the Protection of the Republic. These new laws could achieve their purpose only if at the same time the great clean-up in the administration, the army, and the courts were accomplished and

all secret anti-republican organizations suppressed. But how could we expect this most necessary task to be performed as long as the friends of the reaction, the People's party ministers, helped to form the government? The law created for the protection of the republic was later often turned by reactionary judges against the labour movement!

Another opportunity to strengthen the republic had been lost. . . . However, the strong mass movement that followed the murder of Rathenau had one result: creation among the masses of a desire for greater unity. The two Socialist parties responded by forming a working alliance of their Reichstag groups. Immediately the other parties replied: the People's party, the Democrats, and the Catholic party formed their own alliance—obviously to counteract any possible increase in labour's influence as a consequence of our closer collaboration.

I certainly was for greater unity of labour but I considered organic unity unsatisfactory as long as there was not sufficient agreement on our immediate goal, on the methods of achieving it, and on the groups with which we should be ready to collaborate and those we should oppose and even fight. This unity of programme had not yet been reached between the two parties. I did not want utter uniformity, but I was under the impression that the Majority Socialists had not drawn sufficient, if any, lessons from the defeats in the revolution. I felt they had the mistaken conception that Socialists in a republic must always take part in the government, while the Independent Socialists—at least a majority of us—wanted to be very careful in forming alliances with other groups.

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We were strongly opposed to any coalition with the party of big business, the People's party. Besides these immediate problems, we differed in our general outlook on the future of the republic in that we Independent Socialists considered the revolution not yet terminated. I insisted that we should try to clear up these points in negotiations between the leaders of both parties before the Nuremberg unity convention. I was convinced that only a real agreement on the fundamentals of politics and tactics would give formal unity weight and value. However, the time was short, and I had to recognize that the bulk of our membership and of the masses were in favour of unity.

It was a hard inner struggle for me. What should I do, join the united party knowing that I could not agree with the attitude of the important leaders of the former Majority Socialists, or stay aloof and separate myself from the masses of the labouring people with whom I felt so closely connected? I pondered for a long time before I made up my mind. I could not abandon the struggle, the fight for real political, social, and economic freedom, to which all my endeavours had been devoted—and I knew I could not fight efficiently as an individual but only within an organization. I decided: I shall not separate myself from the masses who have had confidence in me throughout the years. But if I join the united party, I can do it only in an upright, honest way, openly expressing my beliefs and insisting upon the right to go on fighting for them.

I conferred with a group of friends, Robert naturally among them, and proposed to them a draft of a declaration which we would present to our party

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convention in Gera preceding the great unity congress in Nuremberg. In this declaration I had formulated in very precise language our fundamental conception. It declared that we entered the united party in good faith, prepared to use democratic methods within the unified movement in our attempt to make our programme that of the majority. Those too eager to obtain unity did not like the idea of the declaration. But no sooner had it become known that such a declaration was planned than the delegates came to ask me about it. A large majority asked to be permitted to sign it. It was later to become the *magna charta* of our right to stand for our convictions, for the freedom of thought without which one cannot belong to any organization.

The Nuremberg convention of unity offered to the thousands who witnessed it a most solemn spectacle. No one could restrain his emotion when our old Wilhelm Bock stretched out his hand to old Wilhelm Pfannkuch in a touching scene of reconciliation. Everybody seemed to be happy. But I was not. I was very sad, as if something had died for me. I felt apprehension of an uncertain, perhaps dark, future. When I was about to leave the hall, unnoticed I thought, Paul Löbe, Speaker of the Reichstag during the greater part of the existence of the republic, stepped towards me. He realized my emotion and the reason for it and had come to show me his understanding and sympathy. He had been a Majority Socialist but had supported its left wing. Löbe promised me comradeship and good companionship in arms—and kept this promise.

The fourth year of the German republic was to be

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its most arduous. The republic had not succeeded in winning the confidence of European statesmen. And the people of the European democracies? Absorbed in their own troubles, uninformed of the great changes the revolution had brought in Germany, unaware of the strong reaction that a narrow, nationalistic treatment of a vanquished nation must have on their own futures, they acquiesced in the actions of their governments. In addition, France had suffered, and on its own soil, most deeply from the madness of war; the people had been told over and over, "*C'est l'Allemagne qui paiera*"—"Germany will pay for everything." The French peasant resisted the heavy burden of taxes and approved of his government's policy of compelling defeated Germany to shoulder the largest possible share of the costs of the war.

We who sought again and again in those years to make the German republic a bulwark of peace and freedom in the heart of Europe had hardly any leisure for peaceful thoughts, driven as we were by the rapid succession of events within and without Germany.

Early in 1923 my physician had advised me to return to the mountains for a few days. No sooner had I arrived than news reached me of France's decision to march into the Ruhr. I returned immediately to Berlin. How often in those years was I compelled to recall the words of that wise and valiant woman of the French Revolution, Madame Roland, who had said that for her generation there could be no peace; theirs was the task of carrying out the revolution. No less stormy was the short life of the German republic. But the generation whose task it was to build the republic had four years earlier endured all the horror

of modern warfare with instruments of destruction more powerful than could ever have been imagined in the time of Madame Roland. The German people still felt the effects of four years of hunger when they were plunged into new travail.

What was the pretext employed by the French prime minister, Poincaré, to accomplish his long-desired occupation of the Ruhr? Germany had lagged in its payment of reparations. Only 11,700,000 tons of coal had been delivered instead of the 13,900,000 demanded; and the shipment of wood to France was short by 200,000 telegraph poles. This, to Poincaré's mathematical and extremely anti-German mind, was sufficient cause to bring the German republic to the brink of ruin and throw Europe into a crisis. My first reaction had been: Are there any circumstances under which the French occupation can be avoided? Ever since Poincaré had become head of his government this act of aggression had to be expected. Therefore, I felt, the greatest effort must be made to give him no pretext. Precisely because the quantities on which Germany had defaulted were so negligible, it seemed to me that the impossible should be attempted—to deliver the consignments on time. . . .

But now we suddenly stood before the reality of the occupation. There was no longer time to philosophize. The patience of the new nation had at last come to an end.

The French soldiers marched into the district that might correctly be called the heart of German economy. The nation's richest coal mines lay in the Ruhr. Were the German workers to go down into the pits under the prodding of foreign bayonets? Were they

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to perform forced labour under the eyes of a foreign army? They knew they would not merely be called upon to make up the deficiency in the reparation payments. They had good reason to fear that the military occupation was only the first step towards a complete separation of the industrial areas from Germany. It was known that Darias, not long after chairman of the finance committee of the French Chamber, had written in 1922, in a secret report to the French government: "The Lorraine iron masters have available twice as much iron ore as they can work . . . but they absolutely require . . . the coke of the Ruhr." The German steel industry could achieve only half of its normal production if it was deprived of French ore, Darias had pointed out.

"We are afraid of seeing her [Germany's] industries develop on a scale which would enable her to assure the payment of the debts which she has acknowledged. But so long as we are on the right bank of the Rhine and are masters of 45,000,000 tons of ore a year, we shall be in a position to play a decisive part in the German steel industry, demanding a control of production in return. And no doubt this will be the solution of the future," Darias had informed his government. His statement was made in connection with the unlawful French occupation of the cities of Düsseldorf, Ruhrort, and Duisburg, on the right bank of the Rhine, and it proved that the German provinces had been seized for a double purpose.

We must fight—even without guns; that was my firm conviction. There are peaceful methods which are uniquely the weapons of the working class. If it is united, not a hundred thousand bayonets can force

productive work, especially if the government sanctions and supports the struggle. That was the reaction of the overwhelming majority of the German people to the Ruhr invasion. Again the working class stood ready to throw itself into the breach, although it was not easy for it fully to trust a government at whose head stood a representative of big industry, Wilhelm Cuno. Despite all these misgivings, public officials, white-collar employees, and the proletariat in the Ruhr district decided almost unanimously to meet the French aggression with passive resistance.

In spite of active co-operation with this policy, misgivings hounded me from the very beginning. Would not the passion which the struggle entailed completely destroy that goal for which we had struggled since the foundation of the republic—the enlightenment of the people and the establishment of friendly relations between the two countries? But despite this danger we could not allow the workers of this large and important district to be enslaved by foreign masters. We could not submit to the threatened separation of unoccupied Germany from its most important raw materials.

From the first I was concerned with the problem of preventing the German people's struggle for existence from degenerating into an orgy of chauvinism. This was not easy. The French had made contact between the inhabitants of the occupied territory with the rest of Germany extremely difficult. None could cross the "border" without special permission from the military authorities. My parents still lived in the occupied territory, and in the year of the Ruhr occupation, with its increased hardships, I could visit

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them seldom and only with great difficulty. It was altogether impossible to conceive of workers' meetings and large demonstrations in the embattled area. One after another my friends were thrown into French military prisons because as high officials of the German republican government, as mayors and other functionaries, they had refused to recognize the authority of the military intruders. Later they were banished from the Ruhr—during peacetime a foreign army banished Germans from their own country and from their official duties !

Under such circumstances how could we teach the German people that they must not hate the people of France ? How could we explain to them that the struggle had been provoked by a clique which represented the great capitalist interests at the moment holding the majority in the French Chamber ? How could we tell them that the French workers wanted to come to an understanding with the German workers ? The task we set ourselves seemed hopeless. Soon, however, I was presented with a remarkable opportunity to offer proof to at least some of the Ruhr inhabitants of this lasting solidarity which continued even during the struggle.

In the spring of the year the International Socialist Congress, at which the so-called Vienna International was reunited with the Second International, met in Hamburg. All the delegates were free from chauvinism, all were deeply moved by the unanimity with which not only the imperialist peace treaty but the occupation of the Ruhr was condemned. They all felt strongly that the occupation violated a people's greatest right, the right to live in peace. The French,

the Belgian, and the English Socialists renewed their friendship with the Germans at the very moment when arrests and senseless shootings increased the bitterness in the Ruhr. I was a delegate to this inspiring congress, and I resolved that the people in the occupied territory must be given some intimation of this spirit of brotherhood. I approached my old friend Paul Faure, leader of the French Socialist party. During the war, while still a soldier at the front, he had been among the first Frenchmen to urge an early peace without victor or vanquished. Later, after being elected deputy from Le Creusot, the district dominated by the all-powerful munitions corporation, Schneider Le Creusot, he had led a fight against the French militarists. I asked Faure to go with me to Germany's western frontier. There in the unoccupied territory, hard on the border of the Ruhr, I proposed we hold a series of public meetings for the people of the Ruhr. He would speak in French and I would translate. We would overcome the obstacle of not being able to hire a hall by holding the meetings in the open country.

Paul enthusiastically agreed. Everything had to be organized hastily, but our friends were so seized with the idea that success was assured. The meetings were held in an open field. One by one the people came across the "border", dodging the patrols of the foreign army, risking imprisonment if they were caught, until at last a great crowd was gathered—much larger than we had expected ! Paul Faure is a great orator ; impassioned, he sweeps his audiences along in the surge of his emotions. Intuitively he knows how to find the correct idiom for his audience. Although

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most of the people understood no French, they were carried away. When I translated his words, the enthusiasm mounted. Across the "border" were his hated countrymen, military police, intruders, and here on German soil with his German brothers stood a Frenchman who had the courage to condemn the imperialist ambitions of France's army.

Oh, if in 1923 France had only listened to this voice of peace, it would not now be trembling before a resurrected Pan-Germanism more aggressive, more unchecked than that of the Kaiser!

As a true internationalist, Paul Faure asked me to return the favour. As soon as I had time I was to go to France. It was summer before I could leave. The journey itself was a problem. The resistance of the German workers to the French military authorities had at last resulted in French seizure of the railway administration. We boycotted these railways exactly as we would have boycotted any attempt at strike-breaking. I had to solve the problem of getting deep into France without using the railways. At last even this was solved. A French friend took me by motor-car over the French frontier. In that way I was also able to return. He did not do this without grave risk to himself. His friendship, like his courage, I shall never forget.

What joy to meet again those of the old friends who had survived the war. Some of the very dear ones were gone forever—killed in battle or, like my dear friend Paoli, dead from disease contracted in the trenches. New comrades, younger ones, had joined our old fourteenth section in Paris. They had been told of my pre-war activity and of my work in Ger-

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many, and they asked me to visit them. They gave me a touching reception. Enthusiasm ran so high that upon the proposal of Dr. Oguse, an old-timer, they nominated me for honorary membership in the French Socialist party, possibly the only foreigner who has ever received this honour.

I arrived in Paris shortly before the workers were to observe the anniversary of the murder of Jean Jaurès, their beloved and martyred leader, the first casualty of the World War. With Paul-Boncour and other Frenchmen I was asked to address the memorial meeting. Paul-Boncour expressed his particular satisfaction in speaking from the same platform with me, a German Socialist who during the war years had protested against the slaughter and voiced a desire for peace.

The enthusiasm among the Parisian workers and middle class was as tumultuous and heart-felt as that which Paul Faure had aroused in the German fields. The authorities, however, were less enraptured. The meeting was held on the last evening of my stay in Paris. Afterward I remained with a few close friends talking late into the night. They brought me to my hotel, and I was no sooner in my room than the telephone rang. Two o'clock in the morning! I let it ring, for I suspected who might be so importunate. When at six o'clock that morning there was a loud knock on my door, I was not taken by surprise. I arose, dressed myself quickly, and opened the door. The police. They had waited the whole night below in the hotel. I hopefully expected that they would escort me over the border in a patrol wagon and thus spare me the cost of the journey. The mark stood even then at 3,700,000 to the dollar, and I had partly

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to finance the journey myself. But I was very soon disappointed, as were the police. They had expected that my passport would not be in order and that they could, therefore, arrest me ; but my papers were absolutely valid and there was nothing with which they could find fault. They excused themselves for annoying me during the night and I had to pay out the last of my money for the return trip.

Conditions in Germany were gradually coming to a head. Day by day the misery increased in both the occupied and the unoccupied territory. The extremists of the Right demanded active resistance and committed several acts of violence in the occupied territory. This could only hurt the German cause, which had aroused great sympathy in large parts of the world. Military aggression, the unjust occupation of German soil in peace time, could be dealt with effectively only through passive resistance. These acts of sabotage made many of us uneasy. We were unwilling to join in a united front with those who, we already suspected, would prefer power politics to the politics of reason if they ever held the reins. The government did not stand behind the saboteurs. But as long as an unbroken front was necessary to meet the menace of French militarism and capitalism, we dared not disrupt it.

In historic periods when every decision and act carries a heavy responsibility, a leader's task is very difficult both politically and personally. A leader who wishes to be taken seriously dares not simplify problems for the sake of mere popularity. In that hour the fate of the working class could not be separated from the fate of the nation, however different the results of the

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struggle might be for the industrialists and the proletariat. The common man in Germany bore the entire burden of the struggle for the Ruhr just as he had borne the war burden. It is he who must chiefly be thanked if the country was once again saved from dismemberment. The National Socialists who to-day speak so contemptuously of the fourteen years of the republic in those days had absolutely no understanding of Germany's desperate struggle for existence. While the German workers on the Rhine, in the Ruhr, in all of Germany, starved and sacrificed, the National Socialists turned their weapons against the "November criminals" as they used to term labour officials and democrats. It was clear to us that without national independence we could neither attain nor preserve domestic freedom.

This struggle for independence, forced on us from the outside, added tremendously to the difficulty of clarifying our internal problems and led to an increasing paralysis of the domestic economy. The paper certificates which were called money grew into figures ever more astronomical. Their value was measured with the dollar. After my return from Paris the dollar had risen on the Berlin exchange to a value of more than seven million marks. Shops began to close at midday because, with the sharp rise of the dollar, business men could no longer keep up with the rapidly changing prices.

In the midst of all this unrest I was able to pay a short visit to my parents in the occupied territory. I found my mother very much disturbed. She complained that my father was simply giving away his entire stock of goods ; unlike others, he refused to

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adjust the selling price to the cost price. It had long been impossible to set any fixed value on the mark, as its value changed from day to day. If my father continued, his large and valuable stock would soon be entirely squandered. I tried to convince him of this. He was astonished that I, of all people, should express such ideas. Like his father before him, he was known as an upright and honourable business man, and even in these stormy times he would not deviate from his principles. He refused to profit from the misery of the people. I neither could nor would argue any longer. The result, after the inflation, was what my mother had feared—my father had given away the greater part of his property.

Undoubtedly some persons became profiteers during the inflation. In part, these were the speculators in bills of exchange and stocks. But for most of them it was a false profit that quickly melted away after the stabilization. The most spectacular profiteer was Hugo Stinnes. He utilized the stupid and irresponsible policy of the president of the Reichsbank, Havenstein, constantly to acquire new stock majorities and expand his concerns indiscriminately. The Reichsbank lent money on time without taking into account the value of the mark. Thus men like Stinnes, who were able to go directly to the Reichsbank, could borrow capital when the exchange rate of the dollar stood at three million marks and repay their loans later when the dollar had risen to a hundred million marks. Small wonder that such a monetary policy contributed to the ever growing depletion of the Reichsbank's gold reserve !

A complete stabilization of the German currency or,

more important, creation of a new currency could not be accomplished as long as the hole in the west was open—that is, as long as the government had to pump millions every day into the occupied territory to sustain the people whose passive resistance had led them to forgo their regular income. Moreover, Hugo Stinnes's accumulation of blocks of stocks, aided by the Reichsbank's shortsighted policy, had to be stopped for economic as well as psychological reasons. Stinnes himself did not recognize this. From the first moment of his membership on the foreign affairs committee of the Reichstag, to which I also belonged, I felt that he was honestly convinced that the interests of his enterprises were identical with the economic interests of the German people. When Hugo Stinnes spoke at committee meetings in his strange low whisper, members listened with every nerve strained. Yet it was no extraordinary wisdom that we heard, and the great respect of the majority was paid rather to the currently successful and daring entrepreneur than to the thoughtful statesman. A little later we were to see that even the entrepreneur was not so successful and that his huge enterprises could melt away as quickly as they had been accumulated.

Hugo Stinnes opposed stabilization on the ground that it would injure Germany's ability to export. It did not enter his mind that German goods were able to compete abroad only because of the underpayment of the German worker, which was hidden by the tremendous inflation figures. This lack of stabilization was deeply felt by the workers. I lived among them and daily I saw their misery increase. Towards the end of the struggle for the Ruhr I felt it in my own

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body. Often I had no bread and no money with which to buy it ! Yet I belonged to the high-income class. The Reichstag sent us our salaries through the post office. Before the post office could pay it out, the mark would again fall so low that I could just manage to pay my rent ; nothing was left for the remaining living expenses. The fee for an article I might be asked to write, although remitted immediately on receipt of the manuscript, was enough when it arrived to buy only a postage stamp ! Without the help of my proletarian friends I would often have gone without the necessities of life, and it was very seldom indeed that I did not leave the table hungry.

For the great mass of people it was no different. In September we had to pay 220,000,000 paper marks for one dollar, and gradually we began to count in billions. I have never been able to understand how the ordinary person could arrive at any conception of those dizzying figures. Many things became scarce, and again there were bread-lines before the shops. If a person had money in his hand, he could not rest until he had spent it, and that was the only thing to do. Money was still worth more to-day than it would be to-morrow, and we soon learned to calculate in hours. Wages were paid twice and, later, three times a week. Usually the worker immediately bought provisions for his family in the vicinity of his factory, for if he waited to let his wife shop in the neighbouring store, the mark would again have fallen and perhaps they could buy nothing.

Foreigners then in Germany could enjoy for a ridiculous amount luxuries such as they could never have afforded in their own countries. That these visitors

were not met with great cordiality by the starving Germans can surprise no one.

In addition to these difficulties, on the political side the nation had to bear the tremendous weight of the struggle for the Ruhr. In the summer the Union of German Industry laid down a series of outrageous conditions on which it would help the government. It offered a guarantee of 500,000,000 gold marks to be shared between industry and agriculture. In return for this, which was nothing more than a civic duty, it dictated its terms to the government: there was to be no state interference in industry; demobilization decrees and the last remnants of planned economy (which protected both the consumer and the worker) were to be abandoned. It demanded also complete freedom in labour agreements, although "in principle" the eight-hour day would be upheld; and they demanded that industry be freed from "unproductive taxes". Incidentally, the tax on employees' salaries was deducted by the employers from the pay envelopes, thus making the levy as fixed as the salaries themselves. But the propertied classes paid their taxes many months after they had fallen due, so that, through the constant depreciation of the mark, what they paid was only a small fraction of the original value of the tax. Demands of the people for tax reforms were disregarded. A stronger control of foreign exchange, called for by the Socialists to prevent further capital flight, was never accomplished.

At last the people asked themselves: would it be the same as it had been during the war? Then, too, it was we who starved and sacrificed, while the rich, by bootleg means, could get everything they wanted.

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Now that the masters of industry sought to utilize the nation's misery to dictate terms to the government, the unrest of the people was further intensified. With each day the misery increased and with the mounting tide of discontent the social crisis sharpened, the elements of conflict grew. The "Black Reichswehr", an illegal military organization under the leadership of Major Buchrucker, attempted a Putsch on October 1 in the Prussian fortress of Küstrin. The Putsch was put down and the leaders arrested, but the people learned of the Black Reichswehr's existence, for the truth leaked out despite attempts to conceal it. Could passive resistance still be maintained?

Some of the French military authorities tried to arouse a separatist movement in the occupied territory; they hoped to utilize the confusion which would arise to effect the separation of this important Rhineland district. Among the people there was very limited sympathy for this movement; its following was composed mainly of riffraff for whom the Rhineland people felt only contempt. Some among the French authorities, particularly those who had been in the Ruhr for a longer time and had a feeling for the people, realized that this effort was both mistaken and hopeless. One of their leading men frankly admitted this to me.

Still more serious, however, were the events in Bavaria. Here the middle class had never been very strongly in favour of the republic. This dislike was combined with Bavaria's traditional separatism; its own particular quirk was striving after the preservation of "Bavarian individuality". This "Bavarian individuality" manifested itself now in the increasingly reactionary political recruiting of the ruling Bavarian

People's party, the Bavarian wing of the Catholic or Centre party. The situation came to a head when the Bavarian administration named the Munich president, Kahr, as General State Commissioner and declared a state of siege. It amounted to an actual rebellion of Bavaria against the Republic. Thereupon the Berlin government decreed a state of siege for the entire nation, basing its order upon constitutional prerogatives which gave federal rights precedence over states' rights. The exceptionalist position of Bavaria had to be settled. But the Bavarian State Commission and the Bavarian government ridiculed this demand and drew the leaders of the Bavarian Reichswehr into their rebellion. The Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* violently attacked the President of the republic and the Minister of the Reichswehr. Thereupon the Minister of the Reichswehr announced the suppression of the newspaper and ordered his subordinate, von Lossow, the general in command of the Bavarian Reichswehr, to occupy its premises. Von Lossow refused to carry out the order, having no desire to quarrel with the Bavarian government. When the minister demanded his dismissal, von Lossow delivered this order to the Bavarian authorities. He did not retire, but the Bavarian government, instead, demanded the resignation of the Reichswehr Minister!

The republic could not re-establish its authority in Bavaria—it answered the Bavarian provocations with declarations on paper. But it behaved quite differently towards the governments of Saxony and Thüringen. In these states Social Democrats and Communists governed in coalitions, supported by the diets, which had been elected by a majority of the people. Both

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governments were, therefore, altogether legal, even if they did not please the bourgeoisie of their regions. The coalitions were designed as a united defence against the danger of fascism. I sympathized with this struggle and was in close touch with my Saxon friends. It was at that time that I first became acquainted with the Saxon prime minister, Zeigner. He was a sensitive man, too sensitive to be a statesman, highly cultured and with a real enthusiasm for the republic. The fact that he was a newcomer to the field of active politics aggravated his already complicated task. Given the good will of his associates, he would have soon overcome this drawback. His position was arduous and thankless. His difficulties had begun with the Communist members of his cabinet. But Zeigner had incurred the special wrath of the Minister of the Reichswehr because he had made it his specific task to learn the truth about the Black Reichswehr and to fight with all his power against the existence of this illegal group. In Saxony, as a counter-move against the private army of the National Socialists, the "Proletarian Hundreds" were formed with the co-operation of the Saxon government. These were military formations of loyal republicans whose aim was to protect the republic from a putsch by the nationalists, and particularly by the Nazis.

The republic had taken no action against the private army of the Bavarian National Socialists, although it must have known that the purpose of this group was to overthrow the republican regime. Now the most outrageous incident took place. The commanding officer of the Saxon Reichswehr demanded the dissolution of the Proletarian Hundreds. A violent con-

troversy followed between the republic and the Saxon government. The latter soon learned that though the republic would tolerate the Bavarian violation of the constitution, it would show a strong hand towards a proletarian government. An understanding might still have been possible between Saxony and the republic except for the clumsy and provocative action taken by the Minister of the Reichswehr. He appointed a government commissioner for Saxony and demanded that the elected government of Saxony resign. When Zeigner rightly rejected this illegal demand, he was arrested. Federal troops were sent in. The government had been elected legally and held the confidence of a majority of the people—but it was destroyed by military force. The people of Saxony met the oncoming Reichswehr with wild rage. So brutally did the army proceed that in various places clashes claimed a high death toll among the people.

But Bavaria, openly rebelling against the authority of the republic, continued unpunished !

It was this that most aroused the people : severity against the Left, tolerance towards the Right. The state of siege was employed only against the working class, that same class which in the struggle for the Ruhr had borne the entire burden of maintaining the German republic. The workers had been thrown into French prisons, they had been banished from their country, they had been killed—more than a hundred—and all of them had starved no less frightfully than in the most desperate war years. When one looked about in the streets of the large cities, one saw only listless, emaciated figures, pale and careworn faces. Must the same thing always be repeated—must so

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much devotion always be rewarded with injustice? Was there any reason left to struggle and sacrifice? Those questions agitated the entire working class in the occupied, as in the unoccupied, territory. The portents of a hunger revolt were perceptible.

In the streets of Frankfurt this terrific tension was already apparent. Crowds of people milled about without aim or purpose. It seemed as if they sensed that something was about to happen and they wanted to be there when it did. They offered a terrible picture of suffering.

At this time an extra-hard blow fell. The firm of Kleyer, the most important metal works in the city, closed its doors and discharged its workers. This gave an impetus to mass dismissals all along the line, and the majority of the workers now suffered extreme poverty. A few days before, by agreement, the wages of the metal workers had been fixed at eight billion marks an hour. What the buying power of this grotesque figure was no one really knew—the next day the mark had fallen again. Unemployment increased, prices soared. The cost of living in Frankfurt towards the end of October was: without clothing, 1,458,321,000,000 marks a year; with clothing, 1,705,936,000,000 marks. Such were the astronomical figures in which the German people had to calculate. Reckoning stops at such a point, rational thoughts cease, and emotion takes possession.

An explosion was due. It came in the form of demands for a general strike. Why did its proponents want to involve the entire working class in a political general strike? None of them could answer this question—they themselves did not know. They merely

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knew that the burden simply could be borne no longer. A valve had to be opened. They thought a general strike would change the entire situation.

The Frankfurt union heads had met and had averted a local general strike by referring the decision to Berlin. A large part of the workers refused to abide by this decision. Excitement rose higher, and the workers decided immediately to call together all the shop stewards in the city. The workers from the factories themselves would decide. Neither party nor union leadership was consulted. I learned of this decision and sought out the political leaders, the industrial leaders, all those who held high positions in the administration. I pleaded with them, "Let us go to the meeting this evening. Perhaps our efforts will be in vain, but we hold our authority only for the purpose of using it in such decisive hours. Let us try to save the workers from injuring themselves." The plea was rejected by everyone: "This evening's meeting is a mad affair. We will have nothing to do with it."

What could be done? I decided to go. I felt a duty to point out to the workers the economic consequences of a strike. At this moment a general strike would be welcomed by the employers. Until now the factories had been able, to a large extent, to manufacture for export. But now, through the tremendous rise in prices, the export trade was practically cut off. Domestic buying power was also very low. A general strike would only permit the industrialists to free themselves from their contractual commitments. During this period there were still laws extending to workers' protection against dismissal. A strike would enable the employers to evade their legal responsibilities

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towards discharged workers. Later, when they rehired, they would seek out those workers who were most docile. Thus they could rid themselves of the older, more experienced shop stewards who had insisted too strongly on fighting for the rights of the working class.

I dared not be silent—I had to try at least to raise a voice of reason at the meeting. As I approached the People's Centre, where the meeting had been called, I could see what awaited me. Thousands, inflamed, aroused, forced their way into the building. Only because they all knew me could I succeed in getting into the hall. The balconies were completely filled with the unemployed. In the corridors of the building the masses crowded, pushing and shoving. The air was charged with electricity.

I asked to be permitted to speak first. A glance around the hall had convinced me that an appeal to reason would miscarry.

I said to the workers that they could count on me under all circumstances, I would never desert them. But I pointed out the economic situation and the service which they were unwarily on the point of performing for the industrialists. I could go no further. An uproar filled the hall. The most excited would not listen to me any longer—they would listen to no one who did not agree with them about the general strike. At last a Communist called upon his party comrades to hear me quietly, for, he said, I had always served the working class faithfully. Even if they did not agree with me, they ought, nevertheless, to listen to my arguments.

That was better than I had expected. Meanwhile, however, a similar meeting was being held in the

vicinity. Reports of my speech were given there. It was answered by demands from several extremists that I be hanged.

When I saw that it was impossible to obtain the complete abandonment of the general strike, I tried to save the situation and protect the workers from too great harm. I asked them why they wanted to strike, what the goal was for which they were determined to struggle. There was no clear answer. It was a revolt against hunger, against the injustice of the disparate treatment of the Right and the Left, against the growth of reaction, and particularly against the entry of the army into Saxony.

I said that if the Saxons themselves wanted to fight and would appeal to our solidarity, we would naturally be ready to join them. But Frankfurt, alone and isolated, could not carry on a general strike against the entry of the Reichswehr into Saxony.

After the advocates of the general strike had unmistakably shown that they had no clear idea of a goal, I made a last determined attempt to save the situation. I proposed that a limited twenty-four hour—at the most, forty-eight hour—demonstration strike be called, after which the workers would again take up their tools. I counselled them not to include further demands unless similar actions were decided upon in Saxony or the rest of Germany. My friends in the audience were delighted with this solution. Such a strike could not be lost and would save the situation. Since it would be intended only as a demonstration and a warning, it would not have to be pursued to a victorious end. A one- or two-day strike demanded no support from the union treasuries. Such support could not be

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counted upon in any case, for the complete ruin of the German currency as a result of the struggle for the Ruhr had emptied the best-filled union treasuries. And without financial assistance the starving workers could not hold out long.

I discussed this proposal, which had struck a sympathetic response among part of the audience, with the Communists. My proposals fell on deaf ears. They wanted their general strike without any concern for the consequences. All my efforts were in vain. Outside on the streets thousands of the depression victims impatiently awaited the outcome, threatening to storm the building unless a general strike were decided upon.

A committee of action was formed to which I was elected. That night we held a conference—but everything was wrecked by the obstinacy of the Communists. The unions opposed a general strike on principle, but they were ready to take part in a limited demonstration strike in order to save the situation for the workers. The unions were alienated by the behaviour of the Communists, and on the next day only a partial strike began. It showed that the Communists influenced a large part of the unemployed, but only a small part of the employed. After two days it was decided to resume work. The result was what I had feared—a terrible defeat for the workers. In later years many Frankfurt workers reminded me of this episode—regretting that my advice had not then been taken, for, if it had, many a key position lost by the defeat of the general strike would have been saved. Countless thousands starved for months before they were re-employed.

Immediately after the clearing up of the situation in Frankfurt my promise to the people was discharged. Obeying the request of my Saxon friends, I left for the occupied section of Saxony. Here, too, they were considering a general strike. But here they had a clear aim: to restore legality, violated by the entry of the Reichswehr. Since the action had not arisen spontaneously out of the will of the masses, I again counselled a limited strike. It impressed me that here, in the midst of the events which had stirred the temper of Frankfurt so powerfully, the people were so much wiser although there was no lack of provocation. Clashes with the army were many. Thus in Freiberg, when people on the street did not immediately obey the command to return to their homes, they had been shot at by the Reichswehr and twenty-three dead and thirty-one wounded had been left lying on the street. The strike in Saxony was only of short duration, since a new legal government had meanwhile been organized in the Saxon diet. This laid a basis for constitutionalism and adjustment of the dispute with Berlin.

The struggle for the Ruhr had at last to come to an end. It had proved that even an unarmed people could in their despair still grasp at means of defence, that force alone could not keep the wheels of industry turning. But at what a heavy sacrifice. . . .

The final episode in the struggle for the Ruhr once again made clear who were the true patriots among the people. The French general, Degoutte, had not attempted to negotiate with the German government for the cessation of the policy of passive resistance. His ridiculous pretext was that the govern-

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ment would not cease its aid to the unemployed of the Ruhr. As if one could simply abandon tens of thousands to naked misery ! Degoutte turned to the industrialists, Stinnes, Vögler, Klöckner, and Otto Wolff—all men with whom Adolf Hitler later was to be on the best of terms. The German government and its people first learned from Paris despatches that in these direct negotiations Hugo Stinnes had sought the co-operation of the French generals to force the German miners to accept a working day of ten hours above ground with eight and one-half hours for underground work.

That was how industry repaid the working class which in the darkest hours of the German republic had suffered, starved, and sacrificed everything for German independence. At the end of the Ruhr struggle, in an appeal to the German people, the government stated that 180,000 Germans had been exiled from their homes by the French army of occupation, that hundreds had been imprisoned and more than a hundred killed. But the most critical result of the occupation was the complete ruin of the German currency, and through this the total expropriation of the lower middle class. These people would not admit that they had been declassed, could not reconcile themselves to becoming proletarians. They became the first recruits when the wave of Nazism swept over Germany. They believed the Nazi promises because they could no longer believe in themselves.

In 1923 the French did everything to create for themselves the terrible menace of 1939.

X

YEARS IN THE REICHSTAG

THE Ruhr struggle, with all it entailed, the measures connected with its liquidation and the stabilization of the German currency, had exacted from the labouring classes—including the white-collar workers—the heaviest sacrifices. They had to pay, as usual, the costs of maintaining Germany's integrity. Wasn't it exactly as in the war? An understandable discontent was rising. Our parliamentary group demanded amendment of some of the government decrees, the alleviation to some extent of labour's burden. Other groups presented their demands. The government, headed by the Catholic, Marx, refused to support such changes, and the Reichstag was dissolved in the spring of 1924.

It was at that time that an invitation to come to Belgium reached me. Should I accept it despite the fact that the nomination of candidates for the new Reichstag was nearing? The selection of candidates was complicated somewhat as a result of the reunion of the two Socialist parties. However, I concluded that they knew my record. If they wanted me back in the Reichstag, they could nominate me in my absence. If they didn't want me, I should not impose myself on them.

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I went to Antwerp, in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium, where my oldest sister lived. My friends of the labour movement gave me a warm reception. Willem Eekelers, chief editor of the labour daily, whom I had met before at the metal workers' conventions, where he was a delegate, did everything to make my sojourn as agreeable as possible and at the same time useful for the labour movement. Eekelers, descendant of a peasant family and of heavy stature, is a very good orator. He had enjoyed little education in his childhood but had since used all his spare time to fill the gap. He was the recognized labour leader of his province, and later he became a member of the Chamber and a successful alderman in charge of Antwerp's educational system. It was Eekelers who introduced me to a circle of artists, painters, and musicians. From them I learned to look at the dreamy, grey Flemish landscape with more open eyes and to recognize its singular charm. We people of the mountain regions find it difficult to recognize the beauty of the lowlands, especially when the plain is so often wrapped in fog as in the Flemish country. But living, even for a short time, with the people of this region is to be captured by the warmth of their spirit. They have a deep love for their land and, in contrast with the simple, calm, landscape, are of a cheerful, gay temper—people who deeply enjoy life in all its phases.

De Bom, my chaperon, editor of a newspaper and a former librarian, took me to the typical old Flemish home of the painter I. Opsomer in Liers, a picturesque little medieval town. Once there we also went to see Felix Timmermans, the peasant writer whose home was crowded with a great collection of old-

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fashioned knick-knacks. We were always accompanied by a number of young painters, encouraged and patronized by young-old De Bom. On one of our trips we visited in his castle another of De Bom's friends, Jef van Hof, the musician and composer. We became good friends, and a few years later Jef and De Bom came to see me in my little house in Dresden and again we spent happy hours together. That night in Flanders Jef sat at the piano and let his imagination roam. Of tall, lean stature, this man with the glowing eyes and great love of music seemed to fit well into his surroundings—people called his home the "spook" castle. All these people in a way were rebels—enthusiastic Flemings who had revolted against the domination of the Walloons in this bilingual Belgian homeland.

Eekelers also wanted me to meet his friends, the Flemish workers. One evening he came to see me and said :

"Toni, I have arranged a series of meetings and you must come with me and address the audiences. You may speak in German. They will understand you. They learned the language during the occupation, if they did not know it before. You will be the first German since the war to address them. Will you come with me?"

"Do you really think we can risk it, Willem?" I replied. "I have been driving around the country for several days and everywhere I have seen the ghastly ruins of homes, barns, and factories destroyed by German shells and grenades. People cannot have forgotten so soon what they suffered under German occupation and I do not want to hurt their feelings."

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"But you were not responsible for it," Willem retorted. "Our workers have remained internationalists in spite of all their suffering. Please do come."

I could not refuse him, nor did I have cause to regret it. In these densely populated towns and villages, men and women, workers and farmers, flocked into the meeting halls—very plain places, most of them adjoining a public house. They came in their simple clothes, the women without hats, their faces still showing traces of suffering and privation. But far from having become hardened by what they had endured, they were the most receptive and sympathetic audience that a speaker could desire. Such an enthusiastic reception I certainly could not have expected. No, these people did not hate, despite their sad experience with the armies of my country. They wanted understanding and friendship, even with the "enemy" of yesterday.

How much did I need such encouragement after the sad realization of the lack of understanding on the part of the Allied statesmen for the young German republic.

While I was still in Belgium, Robert wrote me that both of us had been renominated as candidates for the Frankfurt district. But at the same time my friends in Dresden, Saxony, asked me if I were ready to be their candidate for the Reichstag. They wished to replace the elderly, very moderate man, who had hitherto represented them, with a younger, more progressive person. I accepted both nominations. You could do that in the German republic, for residence in the constituency was not required.

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Of course, I had to rush home to start the campaign. This time I had to campaign in two constituencies, besides addressing a number of meetings in other cities to which I was invited. Though our party suffered heavy losses, I was elected in both constituencies, Frankfurt and Dresden. I had to choose between the two seats and I finally decided to become a member of the Reichstag for Dresden. That city would confront me with a new task and probably new difficulties and, therefore, an opportunity for new experiences. I learned to like the people of my new surroundings, so different from the cheerful population of the Rhine and Main valleys to which I was accustomed. But I also had to combat there demagogues whose radicalism was only a vehicle of careerism.

The Reichstag elected in May, 1924, was short-lived. Its only work consisted in the adoption of the Dawes Plan, the bills containing new conditions for settlement of the reparations and other impositions of the Versailles Treaty. These bills were finally adopted with the votes of the German Nationalists (*Deutschnationale*), who had vigorously campaigned against these laws and against a policy of understanding. They finally traded the votes of half of their members for the promise of Stresemann's People's party that it would insist on the formation of a government with the participation of the Nationalists. Prime Minister Marx was unwilling to submit to the conditions of this horse trade, so the Reichstag was dissolved, and on December 7 we had the second general elections of 1924.

It was interesting to realize how much the elections

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reflected the fact that economic misery led to increased influence for the extremist parties, while improved business activity, together with some improvement in international relations, had the result of weakening them.

MAY 4, 1924

	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Members Elected</i>
Socialists	6,014,372	100
Communists	3,746,643	62
Nazis	1,924,018	32
Others	17,703,544	278

DECEMBER 7, 1924

	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Members Elected</i>
Socialists	7,880,058	131
Communists	2,708,176	45
Nazis	908,087	14
Others	18,786,676	303

Nazis and Communists had each lost more than a million votes within seven months, while the Socialists had gained almost two million. But at the same time the German Nationalists came back somewhat stronger with 103 members instead of 96. They promptly insisted upon cashing in their proceeds of the horse trade for ministerial positions.

A new era for the German republic began in 1925. The government of Dr. Hans Luther, later Nazi ambassador in Washington, was based on a pact between heavy industry, represented by the People's party, and the Junkers, the big agrarian property owners, whose parliamentary delegates were in the German Nationalist party. Of course, it was not pure idealism that bound these two parties together but rather pure material interest. It was the year that

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opened with a victory for reaction in the election of Paul von Hindenburg as President. Naturally, he was the candidate of the Right. He was elected only on a second ballot after none of the candidates in the first election had obtained a majority. Hindenburg's election in the second poll was made possible by the attitude of the Communists, who maintained the candidacy of Ernst Thälmann, though it was absolutely hopeless. They took sufficient votes from the republican candidate, the Catholic Wilhelm Marx, to defeat him. The second vote stood thus: Hindenburg, 14,655,000; Marx, 13,751,615; Thälmann, 1,931,151.

This election was to be more decisive than most people could then foresee. The alliance between heavy industry and the wealthy landowners was to have serious consequences. In 1925 Germany had regained the liberty to deal with tariffs and trade policy which had been taken away from her by the Versailles Treaty. What use the Reichstag would make of this regained right would be decisive for the welfare of the German masses and for Germany's future. I had taken an early interest in the problem and had prepared for it by study and investigation. It became my conviction that Germany's geographical and economic position predestined her to become the champion of free trade. A nation with a very highly developed industrial machinery, lacking most of the indispensable raw materials could guarantee a richer life to its people only by fighting successfully to remove the many obstacles to a free exchange of goods between the nations, especially the new states that had been created after the war. It did not escape me that some special interests could profit, at least for a certain

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length of time, from a high tariff, but it had never occurred to me that a member of the Reichstag could justifiably defend such private interests as against those of the nation as a whole.

I followed with close attention the scientific economic discussions which preceded the parliamentary debate. Many of us collaborated in the committee of experts set up by the Reichstag. It developed that, together with my political associates, I could fully agree with the recognized agrarian scientists like Professor Aerebo and Professor Sering. They were strongly opposed to a high grain tariff, the levy that was to become the cornerstone of the entire system. Although very thorough research work was accomplished in these debates, the deputies who later made the decisions took little notice of the proceedings. Most interested and attentive were the labour parties and some representatives of small peasant groups.

During our researches and while we were assembling scientifically sound data, other negotiations had been going on behind the scenes which seemed to interest the gentlemen of the Right much more. The small farmers were not invited to them. The reason for this I had an opportunity to explain later in the Reichstag. Only one tenth of the German agrarians, the Junkers, were interested in high grain prices, while nine tenths of them, the medium and smaller farmers, had to buy grain and therefore wanted low grain prices. The famous scientist Lujo Brentano had estimated that the cost to the German nation of the newly proposed high grain duties would be about one billion marks. The main burden would have to be borne by the masses of the people in the

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form of higher bread prices. When the government of Dr. Luther finally brought its bill before the Reichstag, the deal between big business and big agrarians had already been completed—one group promised the other to vote for their tariffs if they practised reciprocity.

I was one of two speakers charged by the Social Democratic group in the Reichstag to present its point of view. My work in economic legislation was shaped by these aims: the prosperity of the entire national economy, closer co-operation among all European states, and bridging of the gap between the workers and the middle classes, especially the farmers. I could not see why there should remain the old antagonism between worker and farmer, between city and country, which enlisted most of the farmers in the ranks of reaction—to their own detriment and that of the republic. I was prepared to make the utmost effort to bring about a more natural alignment of the component parts of the nation. Could it not be demonstrated that the farmers' interests in the past had always run parallel to those of the labourer? There was the fact that the annual income of the farmers showed the same upward or downward tendencies as that of the workers.

In my address to the house I urged that Europe's welfare required the creation of larger, more efficient markets, which could be accomplished only if the European nations worked towards becoming an economic unit. There should be no economic warfare between European peoples—the success of every country should depend upon its ability and the value of its achievements. The government's weak justifica-

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tion of its bill consisted of reproaches to other nations for having built up high tariff walls.

"But if you reproach the other states for their erection of obstacles to the necessary world trade, how can you rectify their mistakes by committing a similar one with full knowledge of its iniquities?" I asked. "How can you compare Germany's economic position with its need of importing raw material, which must be paid for by at least a corresponding amount of exports—how compare us with other nations possessing richer resources? You say you create this high tariff only as an instrument for negotiating trade treaties with other nations. Why did you then demand that the grain tariff remain separate and fixed? Industry and agriculture, in their secret alliance for higher tariffs, will succeed only in mutually increasing their cost of production. There was never a time when our economy was more in need of a fresh current of the air of foreign competition.

"How can a country like Germany ever dream of autarchy? The full character of your economic policy is shown in the fact that at the same moment that you are demanding new high tariff walls the gentlemen of the German Association of Manufacturers send a demand that the government resist wage increases. How can you bring prosperity by first increasing the cost of living and then keeping down the purchasing power of the masses?"

Through having continued in close contact with developments in the steel and metal industry I had obtained knowledge of secret negotiations between the German iron cartel, the French iron producers,

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and those of other continental countries, negotiations based on a high German iron tariff which had not even been discussed, much less voted, by the Reichstag. If such negotiations were necessary, they should of course have been conducted by the government and with the knowledge and control of the democratic representatives of the people. The obvious assumption of these parleys was that the high iron tariff would not be lowered by the government in trade treaty negotiations. The grain tariff on one side and the iron tariff on the other were the cornerstones of the entire bill—small but powerful groups of economic royalists demanded both forms of protection.

I accused the government of having surrendered the prerogative of negotiations and asked if it were true that they had lent aid to the manœuvre of the steel cartel to form a European steel trust at the expense of the consumers. This strategy was devised so that the German steel trust might take certain limited quantities of iron from abroad at a reduced tariff on condition that the entire quantity would be delivered exclusively to the German steel trust. Thus the foreign producers would have no direct access to the German market, while the price for domestic steel could be manipulated by the German trust magnates. They knew they could in this way maintain an artificially high price for the raw material in Germany, which would be damaging to the export interests of the German machine industry. The latter's secret acquiescence was purchased by promising them certain consolation payments for the materials used in the execution of export orders. I strongly opposed

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such dumping on foreign markets and accused the government of having joined in a conspiracy to transform the tariff on steel and iron into a "cartel revenue"! Something was wrong in the nation if private business was to be permitted to rule the government!

Although later developments proved my accusations to be justified, the government of the profiteers did not divulge any of the vital information to the house. My political colleagues, aware that this was a decisive phase in German history, felt impelled to do their utmost to prevent the republic from launching on a disastrous new course. This course consisted of an attempt to transform a social republic into one dominated by economic royalists. The alliance between the barons of the wheat fields and those of steel, each group granting the other economic privileges at the expense of the masses, promised to be translated, once the moment seemed opportune, into political power far superior to the number of people these two groups represented. Of course, we still believed in human reason and therefore made every effort by argument and a sober, well-documented presentation of facts to convince those of our opponents who did not belong to either of the conspiring groups. Every member of our parliamentary group was called on to collaborate. And everyone did. Long before the discussion started, we had appointed a special staff of research workers to investigate the fundamentals of the problems and to examine every aspect of the proposed new tariff.

My friend Dr. Rudolf Breitscheid was charged

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with organizing the work in the committee as far as the tariff on industrial materials was concerned, while the organization of the debate on all agricultural tariffs was entrusted to me. It was an excellent collaboration. Breitscheid, a very tall, slender person, of handsome and distinguished appearance, was the chairman of our parliamentary group. He is highly intelligent and was the best debater in the house. Free from any false pride, he was a good comrade and friend. For a political leader in a country like Germany, however, he was somewhat too sensitive. In the tariff fight we both worked very hard to organize our departments, meeting with great zeal and co-operation from the other Socialists. We saw to it that each deputy received all the necessary information and documents pertaining to the aspect of the tariff he was to discuss. It was feverish work, but enthusiasm ran high. Not satisfied with the material obtained by our research office, many of our colleagues made thorough investigations for themselves.

The small Democratic group and the Communists supported our fight, and often we gave them our research material. But even our combined efforts could not bring about a real discussion. The parties of the government coalition, the Nationalists, the People's party, and the Catholics, had made a pact behind the scenes, and in order to carry it through without a hitch their deputies were forbidden to enter into discussion with us. They did not enjoy the right to become convinced by our arguments; they could only follow blindly. Only government officials had the sad task of defending the proposed tariff and

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of attempting to refute our arguments, a job at which they were not too successful.

Many representatives of the government parties, the more intelligent and more decent among them, came to me during the debates to express their appreciation of our objective and highly valuable work and their regret that they came with their hands bound. The coalition parties were in a great hurry—they wanted to bring their harvest into the barn before the Reichstag's summer vacation began. They therefore forced us to work intensely all day and late into the night, they themselves meanwhile remaining completely idle. They thus put such a strain on us that many an evening when I came home late I asked my brother to go with me to Luna Park, an amusement centre in Berlin. There I obtained a little relaxation that enabled me to resume the fight the next morning with fresh strength. During the previous years a fine understanding had developed between my brother and me. His political views had become similar to mine and we spent some infrequent free hours together.

All our endeavours in the Reichstag to convince some of the coalition members of the injuriousness of the bill proved to be without avail. Almost nothing could be altered in the bill. What did it avail us that we had all the economists of repute on our side? So eager were the coalition parties to gather the fruit of their pact that they curtailed the right of free discussion in the plenary session and prevented us from arousing the much-needed interest of the public. It was the first attack on parliamentarism in the German republic, and it

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was pushed by the same forces which were later to become the financiers of the fascist movement.

One man who then stood on our side later became one of the most ardent Nazi aides, the originator of regimented foreign trade and of barter agreements. I refer to Dr. Hjalmar Schacht. He did not always have his present contempt for Socialists and Jews. I first met him towards the end of the inflation period. Together with a Reichstag colleague, S. Aufhauser, I was invited to the house of a German industrialist for the specific purpose of meeting Schacht. He was then an aspirant for the position of president of the Reichsbank and he needed labour support. In November, 1938, I read a speech this Hjalmar Schacht made before the Nazi German Academy's Economic Council, a speech which Otto D. Tolischus of the *New York Times* says was "filled with ironic references to the antiquated pre-war ideas dominating the economic and trade policies of the United States". Immediately there became alive in my memory the Hjalmar Schacht who in Germany's democratic days used eagerly to profess his loyalty to these "antiquated ideas". Back in 1925 he did his best to convince Herr Aufhauser and me of his deep democratic convictions—without, however, making a favourable impression on us. Neither of us was responsible for the fact that his ambition was realized and that he became president of the Reichsbank. During those critical months of 1925 he still favoured reciprocal trade treaties and the most-favoured-nation clause, the system of Secretary of State Cordell Hull, which Schacht scoffs at now. Before Reichstag committees, where I had asked to have him appear as

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an expert, he gave testimony in favour of this system. Of course the Nazi was not yet influential in Germany. . . . However, even Dr. Schacht's spine has not proved sufficiently flexible for Nazi purposes, and now apparently he has lost favour with his new masters.

As long as democracy still ruled Germany, the collaboration between men and women members of the Reichstag was on the whole a satisfactory one. Indeed we women were supposed to deal, in the first instance, with women's problems and those concerning the family, child care, and social legislation. There can be no doubt that in these fields the German republic had the most progressive and most elaborate legislation. That accomplishment must be attributed to the intelligent and assiduous work of women Reichstag members. I, however, cannot take too much credit for it. Although I realized that it was my duty to participate in the solution of these problems, my special interest was in the economic field and in foreign affairs. Here it proved to be much harder for a woman to attain recognition. Nevertheless, I was appointed a member of the economics committee and also of the committee on foreign affairs and remained at those posts until the end of the republic. I had sufficient opportunity to collaborate in interesting and important legislative work because I was not afraid of intense work and never came to a committee meeting unprepared. Here oratorical gifts were a nuisance—knowledge and ability counted. Although I have no special cause for complaint, I nevertheless sum up thus my experience as a woman member of a parliament:

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A woman must make a greater effort, must show more efficiency than a man in order to be recognized as an equal. Once, however, her ability is recognized and acknowledged, one can forget about difference of sex.

Our parliamentary group frequently delegated me to lead in debate, to answer and refute the arguments of previous speakers, cabinet ministers or Reichstag members. It happened that I often clashed with other deputies—but these clashes never led to personal vilification or diminution of reciprocal respect. On the contrary, one gained respect for a colleague who had a well-founded opinion and one enjoyed open debate which could be useful to both sides. It often gave me pleasure and inspiration to talk privately with the very witty and spirited Herr von Raumer, a member of the People's party, a capitalist of the electric industry, and a man of great culture. He had been for some time a cabinet minister and had met with resistance in his own group. I like to remember the many talks we had in the Reichstag lobby and the sarcastic remarks of this intelligent representative of capitalist interests. Although it scarcely ever happened that we could agree, we both gained from discussions that were kept on a high level of objectivity.

A similar relationship existed with the Minister of Labour, the Catholic Dr. Brauns. A Rhinelander and a priest, qualities expressed in his rather corpulent but cheerful appearance, he was one of the most able ministers of the republic. He lived through many cabinets of the Centre as well as of the Right, and was often severely criticized by us. But in

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spite of his rather conservative political views, he was a genuine friend of labour. And in personal talks with me he revealed how he had been asked to settle labour conflicts while the persons who had approached him privately blamed him publicly for doing so. The Catholic members of the Reichstag, priests or laymen, certainly included the most witty and gay companions, and this applies especially to the Rhinelanders among them. The President of the Reichstag for most of our republican years was the Socialist, Paul Löbe. From time to time he arranged receptions in the president's palace for members of the house and well-known personalities of the literary, diplomatic, and artistic world. The Catholics generally were among the merriest of companions, inexhaustible in stories of "Tunnes", a legendary humorous character of Cologne.

But not all the guests of the president's palace were so easily amused. Paul Löbe's worry was the entertainment of President Paul von Hindenburg, who attended a few of these evenings.

"My dear friend," Löbe would ask me, "you must help me again to-night. Will you be kind enough to entertain the old gentleman for half an hour or so?"

Löbe was such a kindly, amiable host that it was impossible to refuse him.

However, I objected: "You know, Paul, I have not had any military service. I was not in the trenches during the war and am no devotee of hunting. And you know that that exhausts all possible topics of conversation in this case."

Nevertheless, I usually agreed. I assure you it

was no easy job ! I remember one evening when I was at my assignment and had discussed with the President topics more interesting to him than to me. Searching for more small talk, I tried to interest him in my desire to take a trip around the world. I told him of some ideas I had in mind and of the exorbitant cost of such an enterprise.

" Couldn't you tell me a way to realize that dream without too much expense ? " I asked President von Hindenburg.

The old gentleman, in keeping with the jovial spirit of the occasion, retorted :

" Certainly I can. You go around the world with a training ship of our navy."

" In what capacity could I go ? " I was curious to know.

" In the rank of an ordinary seaman, *Leichtmatrose*," he answered.

" Would you have me freed of severe discipline, and let me go on shore whenever I liked ? "

That, however, was too much frivolity for the President's soldierly mind, and he replied :

" No, you cannot possibly break discipline ! "

Laughter all around us. One of the Nationalist deputies tried to take a snapshot of the old gentleman sitting on a sofa with a woman Socialist.

In later years, of course, the President did not attend any more of these evenings, and once Göring had become President of the Reichstag, all social life and entertainment were ended. To meet with people of all creeds presupposes a degree of culture unknown to Nazis.

Soon after the reunion of the two Socialist parties

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a programme committee was nominated to work out a new party platform, adapted to the needs of the new times without neglecting the genuine values of the socialist philosophy. I became a member of this committee and was made its secretary. That gave me the task of formulating many of the paragraphs of the new programme, utilizing the results of the preceding debates.

The hardest fight took place at the beginning of our work when the general principles of the platform were being discussed. Friedrich Stampfer, chief editor of the *Vorwärts*, together with Dr. Max Quarck, former Reichstag member from Frankfurt, defended with passion the point of view that, now that we had a republic in Germany, only reformistic methods had to be envisaged—the time for revolutionary means had passed for good. I opposed them strongly and was supported by Dr. Rudolf Hilferding and Dr. Adolf Braun. I argued :

“If the social change can be accomplished by peaceful reforms, everybody will welcome it. However, this does not depend exclusively on our good intention. Will the forces of reaction accept these changes? Or must we not also be prepared to see them use violence in a counter-revolution to stop progress, to suppress democracy, and force us again into revolutionary methods? We have to be prepared for both eventualities—the reformist as well as the revolutionary—and show the youth that is ready to follow us the resoluteness of our will to build a new world.”

The fight went on during several sessions and finally both Stampfer and Dr. Quarck stayed away

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from the committee, whose majority sided with us. Later it was to become plain that my concept was only too thoroughly justified. However, practice did not follow suit. We were victorious in the committee—the other side won in practical politics, and the nation had to pay the price for this discrepancy.

Since my youth it had been my belief that you can understand life only when you know the world beyond the borders of your own country. I never could understand how anybody in a responsible position could deal with international problems without knowing some of the more important foreign countries. I made it a rule to travel abroad at least once a year, sometimes more often. I admit my trips were facilitated by invitations to lecture in many foreign capitals. Thus I was not only the first German after the war to address audiences in Flemish Belgium, but also the first to address a large audience in Strasbourg (Alsace) in the German language. It is superfluous to say that I did it without any suggestion of nationalist emphasis.

Having attended and served as an interpreter at all meetings of the Socialist International, I had met the delegate from the United States, Morris Hillquit, and his wife. How could one help being captivated by the charm of Morris Hillquit's personality! His advice was highly appreciated in the International—he belonged to the generation that had laid the foundation of the International in pre-war days. Although from his youth a citizen of the United States, he was familiar with the European scene and its leading personalities. Very young in appear-

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ance, he had a lively interest in new artistic and cultural achievements. When he asked me during our meeting in Frankfurt, at the time of the inflation, to come with him to the opera, he was greatly puzzled and amused that so little American money could purchase the very best seats. Of course, it was not quite so easy and cheap for us Germans!

We met again almost every year and worked together for an entire week at the convention of the International in Marseilles in 1925, where we both laboured hard in the committee on eastern problems. The conferences lasted until midnight or later. Here I learned even better to appreciate Morris Hillquit's brilliant mind, his clear logic, and his amiability even in controversial discussion. In spite of many bitter experiences he was an optimist; nothing was further removed from his mind than the idea that somebody could be vicious. He liked to see the world good and beautiful. And when the ugly side presented itself, he disposed of it with a fine sense of humour and sarcasm. It was in Marseilles that Morris Hillquit suggested I should come to the United States the next year for a lecture tour. And when the summer of 1926 approached, he renewed his invitation. Towards the end of August there seemed to be a breathing-spell from hard work, and I decided to sail. Robert Dissman, with a delegation of the Metal Workers International, had left a little earlier for a study trip in the United States and Mexico.

From the very first day I set foot on the *Aquitania* I refused to speak a word of German. I had thought I knew English rather well—but no sooner had I

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arrived at the boat than I realized that I did not know American at all. My former visits to England had made me feel too safe, because there I had not met any difficulty—now the week of the voyage among Americans brought me to strange territory. However, it was my good fortune that Americans are such kind and patient people. They did their best to be helpful. In glowing sunshine the boat entered New York Harbour. I can never forget how deeply I was moved by the first sight of the skyline, imposing and fabulous. What a strange place this must be !

Morris Hillquit received me at the head of a warm reception committee. We had a short and merry party, and very soon Morris took me to his summer home in Avon on the Jersey shore. There I spent a cheerful and pleasant fortnight—something unusual after my long years of hurry and excitement. Only now did I become aware of the abnormal strain under which we had lived in Germany for what seemed an endless time. We had entirely forgotten how to play, even the usually cheerful Rhinelanders.

Morris did his best to make things as easy for me as possible. He arranged meetings with the press and with persons he thought I should meet, and organized my lecture tour. What a different life the American scene presented in those years of prosperity, as compared with battle-torn and suffering Germany ! How many times would Americans remark, jokingly, "Don't be so serious—don't seek a philosophy behind everything. Take it easy." I was glad to follow their advice. Those weeks in

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the United States were a healthy lesson for me. I was given a splendid opportunity to grow somewhat acquainted with the land and its citizens. My lecture tour took me through the East and the Middle West. Deeply impressed by the fine hospitality of Americans, their simplicity and frankness, I did not for long feel like a stranger. I did my best to study the country and its people, but the more I travelled the greater grew my amazement at those Europeans who, after a brief visit, had returned home to write learned books on their observations.

Nevertheless, I gained certain definite impressions. What was then described as the "American economic miracle" did not, at close sight, seem to me in every respect so miraculous. Abundance and security were not universal. Nevertheless, I met many men of importance who did not doubt the miracle. One of the kindest and most helpful was Professor Jeremiah W. Jenks, the economist, to whom I was introduced by a professor of the University of Berlin. Among the men to whom Professor Jenks and his gentle wife introduced me was Malcolm C. Rorty of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. I have not yet forgotten the very stimulating luncheon conversation in which Colonel Rorty insisted that the United States had discovered how to avoid business crises. He was convinced that prosperity would last. His explanation was that the increasing industrial efficiency and the growing capacity of machinery developed an "American wage system" which enabled labour to keep pace with and to enjoy the growing productivity. I expressed my doubts. I told him that investigation during my trip had shown me

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that not all the workers, but rather only an upper stratum of skilled men, were enjoying high wages. Millions of labourers made only a moderate living, not to speak of the remaining under-privileged, I argued.

"I see a new disproportion between capacity of production and consumptive power developing in these United States," I emphasized, "and I do not see that you have conquered the business cycle."

The two gentlemen looked ironically at the sceptical visitor who did not seem capable of understanding the new American way. . . . Three years later the conversation would probably have taken a quite different course.

Professor Jenks wanted me to meet a leading figure of American big business, the president of the United States Steel Corporation, Judge Elbert H. Gary. It was a daring suggestion—that the powerful head of one of the biggest anti-union corporations meet a German woman, a Socialist, and a trade unionist. I sent Professor Jenks's letter of introduction to Judge Gary and received an immediate answer suggesting an appointment. I accepted and went. A polite young man received me, and we had a long talk. After it had lasted some time, I realized that he had probably been asked by Judge Gary to find out whether I was worth the time that a personal talk would entail. I told the young man that I did not want to insist upon an interview with the president. What I really wanted was permission to visit the plants of the steel trust. We understood each other—the young man went to report and soon came back.

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"Judge Gary wants to see you."

I entered the president's office and found myself in front of a very tall, white-haired gentleman, who, in spite of his advanced age, was of upright bearing. Immediately we became engaged in a most interesting conversation. I was then well informed on the steel industry and its development in Europe. I told him what I knew of the growing European steel cartel and its mechanism. Naturally, I wanted him also to know labour's attitude towards the cartel and towards the industry in general. Judge Gary, of course, did not believe in genuine unions—what he defended was the company union. But he listened attentively when I told him of our trade union experience and especially of the young shop steward movement. Our conversation lasted two hours, longer than either of us had expected. While we were talking, subordinates came in with messages, letters to be signed or orders to be received. The old gentleman handled them with an astonishing alertness and always returned quickly to the point of our conversation. When I finally asked him for permission to visit the plants of his corporation, he immediately dictated letters of introduction to which he added something to the effect that Miss Sender "has a great future before her".

I felt I had imposed long enough on Judge Gary's time and prepared to end the visit. Suddenly he asked me :

"Will you permit me a last, very personal question? You may answer it only if you care to do so."

I encouraged him to go on.

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"Why," he asked, "didn't a woman like you marry?"

I was indeed embarrassed for a moment. But I decided that since our conversation had been conducted in full frankness on both sides, I could satisfy the old gentleman's curiosity on this point also.

"I think, Judge Gary, that we have to make up our minds as to the main task to which we want to devote our lives. Very early I felt the urge to try to give my full service to the cause of freedom and social justice, to help bring about a better existence, materially and culturally, for the under-privileged. We live in a revolutionary period. Family ties could eventually prevent one from showing all the courage and unselfishness that a great cause requires—especially in the case of a young woman. And since the earliest days of my childhood I have been guided by the poet's words: '*Nichts halb zu tun ist edler Geister Art*' (To do nothing half-way is the way of noble minds)."

This conventional-minded titan of American business listened quietly and, it seemed to me, with understanding, if not, perhaps, with approval. I think we separated as friends, although a very strange friendship it was, each belonging to an entirely different camp, pursuing such vastly different goals in life.

My first American trip, towards its end, was saddened by a terrible shock. Robert Dissmann had come to America at approximately the same time but with a trade union delegation. We had met at the Detroit convention of the American Federation of Labour. He had seemed to me somewhat changed, quieter and reserved, no longer the merry Rhine-

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lander I had known. But never could I have thought that it was to be our last meeting. Robert had left for home before I was through with my lecture tour. A few days later, I read in the American newspapers that on his voyage back he had been stricken by a heart attack which took him away. One of the most colourful leaders of the German labour movement, the most devoted I had met, a friend with the rarest qualities anyone has to offer, gone in his forty-eighth year, at the very prime of his life! It was such a painful, unforgettable loss. It was impossible to enjoy again the gay days in New York.

Nevertheless, the idea occurred to me: Would it not be better for me to live in the United States for good? I liked the youth of the nation, the friendliness of its inhabitants, the unlimited possibilities. I finally gave up the thought. It would mean desertion of a task and of the people who trusted me. Once you have entered a movement tied up with the plight of your people, you have given up at least part of your right to personal satisfaction. But when Morris and Vera Hillquit accompanied me to the steamer that was to take me back to my duty, I promised that I would return to the New World. It was a promise that was promptly kept—though it was only for a fortnight that I visited the United States in the spring of 1927 and again in 1930.

I could never spare more time than that, for I had become too deeply involved in exacting activity in the Reichstag as well as outside. Since we had not succeeded in defeating the new tariff, I attacked the task from another point. My effort was directed

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towards breaking down the customs walls by reciprocal trade treaties containing the most-favoured-nation clause. Two parties, the Social Democrats and the small Democratic group, supported that policy. The Communists opposed trade treaties and voted against them, with the exception of one with Russia, notwithstanding the fact that every pact lowered some tariff frontiers. A few more far-sighted leaders among the Catholics and the representatives of the People's party gave me their support.

Reading the debates that took place in the Reichstag during the republic, I realize now that there was hardly a single trade treaty before that body which I did not either report on for the tariff committee or defend before the house. The only exceptions were those treaties of later years in which an attempt was made to change the nature of the reciprocal pacts by a tendency towards a number of autonomous tariffs, tariffs that would not be reduced in treaties. The Nazis, although represented on the tariff committee, did not function there. They were opposed to international trade, declared it a Jewish invention, and were enthusiasts of autarchy. There can thus be no doubt that their doctrine of self-sufficiency later on was not forced upon them, but had always been their economic ideal, corresponding as it did with their exaggerated political nationalism. Each treaty could be pushed through the house only after a fight—the extreme Left as well as the extreme Right directing their attacks at me. Convinced of the soundness of my position, I persistently fought my way through. Encouragement came in the growth of German exports from about nine billion marks in

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1925 to thirteen and a half billion in 1929, giving bread to millions of German workers and bringing new economic welfare to the nation.

It is with a peculiar sentiment that I recall the government representatives with whom I was in closest collaboration while striving for these ends. Among them, for instance, was Dr. Karl Ritter, then Ministerial Director of the Foreign Office and an adherent of free trade—to-day he is in Nazi service. He was ambassador to Brazil and was finally expelled from that country for his Nazi activities. Another was the Ministerial Counsel of the Foreign Office, Dr. Ernst Eisenlohr, a modest and apparently honest officer of the republic, who later on was elevated by the totalitarian state to the responsible post of ambassador in Prague. He was the man who delivered Hitler's demands and ultimatums to the late Czech republic. How a man can be as devoted a servant to a barbaric dictatorship as to a civilized republic goes beyond my understanding. Or are there really human beings performing serious, responsible work without any convictions of their own?

Of course, it often happened that I met some difficulties in our own ranks. In certain cases the manufacturers cleverly attempted to use the shop stewards to further their profit interests or what they called the common interest of employer and employee. There was always the tendency of certain groups in industry, faced with difficulties, to seek salvation in the elimination of competition. They would approach us with demands for higher tariffs.

The campaign of the automobile industry at one point proved to be very effective. First, delegations

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of owners arrived. Then spokesmen from the shop councils visited me. Finally the issue came before our parliamentary group. I convinced our members without much difficulty that a prohibitive tariff on automobiles and automobile parts would only increase the costs of the German car and reduce sales. What we needed was not more protection but more rationalization. We had far too many factories for the German market—only modernization could help, even if it meant temporary sacrifices on the part of the workers. In the long run, rationalization and reduction of the number of factories producing cheaper cars would benefit the workers and the national economy. Despite my arguments, the Metal Workers Union had to cope with much dissatisfaction on the part of members who felt themselves threatened with unemployment as a consequence, so they were told by their bosses, of lack of tariff protection. When the executive board of the union approached me, I proposed that they call a national conference of the shop stewards at which I would deliver a lecture on "how to save the automobile industry". I told them I had confidence in our workers' intelligence. The conference was called. I gave the lecture, and after ample discussion on a high plane, a motion to reject the demands for prohibitive tariffs was unanimously adopted. I am still proud of our workers when I think of this testimony to their intelligent thinking ; and I cannot help drawing from this incident some conclusions on their present attitude towards the Nazi economic system.

Shortly after I had returned from the United States, some of my academic friends, among them

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especially Professor Julius Hirsch, insisted that I ought to prepare for an academic career. I liked the idea. To take part in such work had been my desire ever since I had left my parents. But how to find the time to study for university entrance examinations? Professor Hirsch declared: "You can present yourself at the Prussian Ministry of Education for the examinations given to especially gifted persons. Send the ministry some of your scientific articles in magazines, and I am sure you will be admitted to the examinations."

"But how can I find the time to prepare for the written and oral tests?" I asked.

"You don't need preparation—you will pass."

I entered on the adventure without telling anybody about it. It would be too humiliating if I failed—a member of the Reichstag not being admitted to a university!

I sent my writings to the ministry and was accepted. Dates were set for two written examinations; the two days happened to coincide with very important roll-call votes in the Reichstag, which I could not possibly miss. At two o'clock I started writing—at four o'clock I had to be in the Reichstag. And I was there on time each day. The long experience in hasty parliamentary work and as a journalist had been good training. When I learned that one of the professors who were to give the oral examination was Anton Herkner, I was frightened. A short time before I had written a series of articles criticizing the very famous professor's latest book. But Professor Herkner proved to be the kindest examiner I could have desired. He asked a long series of questions on

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the lines of my writings and parliamentary work, and I was happy to be able to answer them to his apparent satisfaction. I still think I owe it to him that I passed, for my achievements in other matters were less satisfactory.

Now I was a university student. I was not too regular in my attendance in the lecture halls of my "alma mater", but I was a constant visitor in the Reichstag library, and I tried to use every spare moment for study. My Reichstag friends, when they learned about my venture after it was over, scolded me because they thought I had taken too great a chance. What a delight it would have been to my political enemies if I had failed! My friends may have been right—but I had succeeded in my initial tests.

Alas—professional and political work did not decrease in the days that followed. I had to go on working until late at night, travelling to those cities, many outside my constituency, where I could help. We in Dresden also had much educational activity in which I had to do my share. Nobody was surprised when I suffered a reappearance of tuberculosis in the winter of 1927. Again I found myself on the magic mountain at Davos. This time my illness was overcome faster. The three months I had to spend there passed quickly in the company of the sick German poet Klabund, author of *Peter the Great*, who was very seriously affected and not much later was to pass away. How this highly gifted man, with the appearance of a university student, loved life and liked to dance! It was as if he wanted to enjoy life quickly since it would not last long. That winter the Alsatian

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writer, René Schickele, spent the winter in Davos fighting a nervous condition. The Swiss poet, Rudolf Utzinger, used to join us in the Kursaal Café during the sunny morning hours when we were permitted to go outdoors.

It was good that I had had some rest, for the new year was to add a new burden. The Socialist movement had since 1924 published an illustrated magazine for women of the labouring and middle classes called *Frauenwelt*. The idea behind the periodical was that women, having won the right to vote, should be given an opportunity to acquire some political and general culture. But there are many hard-working housewives who dislike the daily newspapers. They are not familiar with politics nor very much interested. We felt, however, that they would read a publication dealing with their daily problems and offering also a glimpse of some of the beautiful things of life, especially if such a magazine had an attractive, artistic appearance. A man, Dr. L., had been made the editor of the paper. After a promising beginning, however, the enterprise started to go downhill. Many complaints from women's organizations appeared, and it was felt that the project could be saved only by a fundamental change in the editorial management. The party discussed the problem for months but could not agree on a new editor.

One day the two presidents of the party, Hermann Müller and Otto Wels, came to me for a talk, during which they asked me to become the managing editor of *Frauenwelt*. They said they knew I was a person with strong political interests and convictions, but

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they thought me also capable of speaking the language of the average small-town and village woman.

"I know," Hermann Müller said, "that you would not use this organ as a mouthpiece for your personal political tendencies but make it the magazine of all the women who want information and entertainment in a pleasant form."

"I cannot answer you immediately," I replied. "We have disagreed on many tactical and other problems in the past. And I want to maintain my independence in the future. You do not expect me to stop my opposition if you give me the job? It may happen that I would become even more outspoken in order to satisfy my conscience."

My intellectual freedom would remain untouched, both men replied; and I felt they would keep their word.

After a few weeks of reflection I accepted the new task—not an easy one, because the paper was run down and had no reputation. But it gave me lots of fun. Before I accepted, I had made certain that I would be granted a budget enabling me to employ the best writers and artists as my collaborators. Since we had the best printing plant working for us, I undertook to give the paper a completely new format. Now I could and did revel in the presentation of my beloved French artists, but without neglecting young German artists and writers and the talents of other nations. Although it was my first experience of the kind, the magazine picked up again. I received no complaint whatsoever until the end—when the Nazis in 1933 took their revenge and suppressed an organ of education for which the Third

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Reich had no use. If it was a success, I owe it to the splendid assistance of an efficient secretary and to the circle of excellent collaborators with whom a close friendship had developed. Without this genuine co-operation it would have been impossible for a single person to publish a magazine expressing such manifold interests. There was never any attempt by the party executive to interfere in my work—they gave me complete liberty.

A period in the life of the German republic when the people were to enjoy a more normal life seemed to have arrived. Economic conditions improved. There was less restlessness. Many thought that the basis of the republic had become safe. I remained suspicious, knowing that the subversive forces of the Right were only biding their time for a moment of depression and despair. But for the time being people worked and were confident. This balanced state of mind profited the Social Democratic party in the elections of May 20, 1928. It received 9,146,165 votes and 152 Reichstag seats, as compared with 7,880,058 votes and 131 seats in 1924. The Nationalists lost approximately 1,500,000 votes, while the Nazis dropped from 908,087 to 809,541. The Communists added some 440,000 to their 1924 total of 2,708,176. It was an impressive victory for the Social Democrats, who had become the strongest Reichstag group. They had to accept their responsibility and form the new government in coalition with other parties.

Hermann Müller for the second time became prime minister—he had been at the head of the government that signed the Versailles Treaty. Müller

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was a hard-working man with a strong sense of responsibility and an almost exaggerated objectivity. Witty and humorous in private, he was sober in his political activity. I think he was not sufficiently a fighter. But one could not find a more chivalrous companion—I had experienced this myself. At a time of acute controversy in the labour movement I had been asked by a constituency in Saxony to come to a convention to debate with Müller. Not only did we have a debate on a very high level, though both of us vigorously defended our points of view, but Müller was chivalrous enough to offer me the last word, to which I was not entitled.

Müller had a hard job as head of the new government, although he had in Gustav Stresemann a loyal collaborator. Stresemann's party, the People's party, however, co-operated only reluctantly with the Socialists and were merely waiting for the propitious moment to swing back to the right. Similar tendencies were prevalent among the strong right wing of the Catholics. This made the life of the government precarious from the very beginning.

Nevertheless, we were not prepared for any disagreeable surprises when in August, 1928, we went to the International Socialist Congress in Brussels. After the convention many of the delegates gathered at a party in the house of the Belgian Socialist, Senator Albert François. Suddenly a journalist came to me :

"I have just received news that the German government has voted to start building armoured cruiser No. 1," he said. "The vote was unanimous."

I was amazed and furious. Of course, the credits for this cruiser, which was to be the first of a series

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of warships permitted by the Versailles Treaty, had been voted by a majority of the Right and over the opposition of the labour vote. The cabinet's decision was only the execution of this vote. But how could the Socialist ministers take a different attitude from that which they had taken as Reichstag members in the opposition ! I considered their stand an exaggerated conception of the duty of cabinet ministers, and a serious mistake. Had they forgotten that in the last campaign we had sounded the slogan that the government of the Right preferred the armoured cruiser to free meals for needy children ? The parties of the Right had curtailed the credits for needy children while voting the expenditure for the cruiser. Our members and voters expected us to stand by our election promises.

I immediately talked the situation over with my colleague, S. Aufhauser, a member of the Reichstag and the president of the Business and Professional Workers' Union, who was present at the reception. On our trip back to Germany we wrote an article and an appeal to our membership, disapproving the government's attitude and maintaining the party's former viewpoint. We both signed this declaration and asked the party's central newspaper, the *Berlin Vorwärts*, to publish it, which it did. It had a good effect—restoring somewhat the shaken confidence of the masses. The Socialist ministers' vote was a serious psychological error—and the psychological effect was often underestimated by our ministers. We who had opposed building armoured cruisers certainly were for general disarmament, but we also were aware that as long as the Allied nations refused to keep

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their promise to follow German disarmament with their own, Germany could not be left entirely unprotected. This cruiser, however, had become a kind of symbol in the eyes of our followers. And for a people like the Germans, easily susceptible to emotional appeal, symbols can take on a real importance.

As far as possible the mistake was repaired when our parliamentary group moved in the Reichstag to halt construction of the cruiser and all our ministers voted with our members. As a step further to clarify the party's position towards the military problem, a special committee was appointed to work out a precise military programme. I was made a member of this committee, the only woman on it. My viewpoint, which I defended in the committee, was this : Germany's geographical and political position should lead her to be the champion of general, internationally controlled disarmament. However, as long as the Allied nations could not be made to disarm as they had forced Germany to do, as long as aggressive states presented a permanent military and social threat, we could not make democratic Germany completely defenceless. Our influence should be used in the international field to put into practice the ideals of international solidarity and security. Meantime, it must be our task on the national field to make the army a better instrument for democracy and the officers' corps a more reliable body for the republic.

During the same year that the party convention decided on its new defence programme, a serious attempt was made to find a more constructive solu-

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tion for the difficulties of German agriculture. The farmers had begun to realize that a permanent raising of tariff walls was not bringing the help they had expected. The government decided to appoint a committee of experts to find a new way out of the difficulty. I was made a member of that committee—again the only woman on it. Most of the members were agricultural theoreticians or practitioners. The research and debate turned to the creation of a grain monopoly. I considered it my task to watch over the interest of the small farmer and the consumer, while a majority on the committee seemed more concerned with the plight of the big wheat- and rye-producing estates.

The work was complicated by the desire of some of us not to violate any existing trade treaty, and also to try to reconcile producer and consumer interests. For weeks we met all day and the discussions lasted until late at night. Some of the representatives of the stronger sex, when the night hours approached, felt tired and unable to make any further efforts. I had the impression of being the lonely guardian of the general and the consumers' interest, and I had to keep alert until the end. I succeeded—never was weary before the sitting was over—because during my activity in public life I had always imposed self-discipline upon myself, not wasting time at night in cafés or clubs. That, of course, did not mean that I lived like an ascetic. I did not disdain to use a short pause during the Reichstag session to go with Professor X of the Economic party to a near-by dance hall and there relax for half an hour while dancing. Such an incident, however,

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was rather the exception—generally members of the parties kept away from each other and met socially only at the official Speaker's receptions.

The experts' committee, although nearing a common understanding, finally was prevented from working out its programme—political influences did not want us to propose an organization for grain production and trade. I did not insist further, doubting whether the small farmers' welfare could be taken care of adequately in view of the strong influence of the big estate owners.

At least one pleasant experience interrupted my hard work during the cabinet of Hermann Müller. The big airship *Graf Zeppelin* was to take a trip to the Orient and upon the suggestion of the Minister of Transport, Herr von Guerard, Captain Hugo Eckener invited me as a guest of the ministry. It was early in spring, 1929, and it turned out to be the most wonderful travelling experience of my life. A mixed company met in the big, ghostly-looking Zeppelin hall in Friedrichshafen. All were deeply moved and united by expectations of a great common experience. In less than four days we should visit three continents and be back again. Gliding smoothly, the giant inspired confidence, and one hardly cared to retire for sleep for fear of missing some interesting view when the ship flew over France, Italy, Greece, Egypt, and Palestine and then to the Dead Sea. It was a solemn moment when the airship dipped below sea-level. We looked at the dark Dead Sea, fabulously lighted by a shiny golden moon, and, with Hugo Eckener, we all clinked glasses filled with Palestine wine. We drank to peace and under-

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standing among the nations. . . . What has since become of this messenger of peace !

During this period the question of German reparations again became acute. The payments under the Dawes Plan were to amount to 2,500 million marks a year beginning with September, 1928. The functioning of the Dawes Plan had been made possible largely by foreign loans, both official and private. But these could not go on indefinitely. A new committee of experts had worked out the Young Plan, named after its American chairman, Owen D. Young. It fixed definite annuities for a duration of fifty-nine years. All foreign control was abolished. Although it still presented a much too heavy burden, the Young Plan was an important improvement over the Dawes Plan. However, the patriotism of the Right apparently was weaker than its desire to strengthen its party influence. Therefore, the Right demanded a plebiscite on the Young Plan. Of course, it lost. The great majority of the German people was then still cool-headed enough to recognize that the defeat of the Young Plan meant continuation of the much less favourable Dawes Plan.

Meanwhile, Alfred Hugenberg had replaced Count Westarp as leader of the German Nationalists. Hugenberg was a former director of the Krupp munitions factory and later became a successful businessman who to a large extent financed the German Nationalist party. With the help of Hugo Stinnes he had organized the advertising agency Telegraphen-Union. He succeeded in bringing under his influence, especially with the beginning of the new economic

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crisis, an endless number of provincial newspapers. To increase his influence, he also acquired the greatest German film enterprise, the U.F.A. His extensive business power made an army of men subservient to him.

I met Alfred Hugenberg very often in the Reichstag. I heard him speak and I never could understand how such a poor speaker, a man with so little personality or alertness, revealing no signs whatsoever of a brilliant mind, could exercise such great influence. I can only explain it by his great economic power, enabling him to control thousands of jobs.

The plebiscite on the Young Plan was the first common enterprise of the Hugenberg and Hitler parties. It was to become significant for Germany's future. Be it said here: Hugenberg and his party are responsible for Germany's descent into barbarism. They gave the rise of Hitler the outward signs of legality. Their support helped to bring the Nazi camp its necessary finances. Hugenberg introduced the Nazis to the respectable world.

For weeks, in the combined committees on foreign affairs and the budget, we had discussed laws for the execution of the Young Plan. I took an active part in this work, and to any objective judge who had studied the complicated matter there could be no doubt that the Young Plan meant important progress. However, all progress was too slow—it was not yet understood internationally that in the interest of world peace the young republic needed some outstanding success.

Instead of that there was new humiliation in store. When the Minister of Finance, Dr. Rudolph Hilferd-

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ing, presented to the Reichstag his programme of new taxes and loans to stabilize the budget, the agent for the Reparations Commission came forward with a declaration that new loans could be floated only with his consent, which he would not grant without Dr. Schacht's acquiescence. The government was thus forced by foreign intervention to submit to the dictatorship of Dr. Schacht, who meanwhile had more and more developed into a voluntary agent of the reaction and soon after of the Nazis.

The conflict between the forces of reaction and liberalism came to the fore in the search for a solution of the difficulties of the unemployment insurance system. The system was unprepared for such a serious economic crisis as developed in 1929. It has been widely argued that labour should have been less intransigent in order to avoid a ministerial crisis and the end of the Müller government. I think this argument is vain. The crisis would have come anyway. The conservatives and reactionaries had gained the upper hand in all middle-class parties, and there were no liberal parties in the Reichstag with which labour could collaborate.

Hermann Müller's overthrow cannot have been unexpected by the middle-class parties. If the defeat of his cabinet had not been deliberate, it would not have been possible to have another government immediately at hand. Such a government was quickly organized, the Right coalition of Dr. Heinrich Brüning. The new cabinet showed itself from the very beginning to be tainted with strong authoritarian tendencies ; in his first declaration before the Reichstag Brüning said : " This cabinet is formed to fulfil the necessary

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tasks in the interest of the nation in the shortest time. It will be the last attempt to find the solution with this Reichstag."

There was no reason to consider the Brüning cabinet the only possible government and to threaten dissolution in case the house did not agree with it. Other men and other combinations might have been found. However, a new course had been charted, and the palace of President Hindenburg became more important than the Reichstag building. Soon the era of intrigues was to start. It was the beginning of government by decree. And when in the summer of 1930 a majority of the Reichstag demanded cancellation of these decrees, Brüning simply announced the dissolution of the Reichstag without any further attempt to come to an understanding.

The elections of September 14, 1930, were a turning point in German history. It was a stormy campaign—Nazis began to appear at my meetings. Without the constant help of the republican militia, the Reichsbanner, we would not have been able to carry on our activity. They protected our gatherings, prepared to answer violence with violence. Election day brought a triumph for the Nazis. While the Social Democrats lost only about half a million votes (retaining 8,572,016), which the Communists gained, the Hugenberg party of the German Nationalists lost almost half of their voters to the Nazis, who jumped from the 809,541 votes of two years before to 6,401,210. They had been the beneficiaries of the losses of their ally Hugenberg and had succeeded in mobilizing those lower middle-class citizens who had never voted before.

A new era had begun—a disastrous era.

XI

THE NEW BARBARIANS APPEAR

THE economics committee of the Reichstag was meeting. We were engaged in a vigorous debate over a government bill—the discussion had been going on for some days. Suddenly, in the midst of the proceedings, the door opened and in came a man whom nobody seemed to know. He sat down in front of the chairman and immediately asked for the floor.

The chairman, old Josef S., at whose side I was sitting, whispered to me, "Who is that man?"

"I don't know—never saw him before. I shall inquire."

I spoke to other members of the committee, but no one knew him. Calling one of the Reichstag marshals, I asked him to bring me the official handbook with the names and photographs of all members.

Meanwhile the stranger's turn in the discussion had come, and he started to speak. He did not seem to know anything about the agenda nor the bill we were discussing. I looked at old Josef; others looked at me questioningly. Who is this chap? Is he a member of the house?

A member of the People's party came to me.

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"Do you think that man is sane? I have never heard such confused talk in all my life."

"You are right," I replied; "I'd better warn our chairman not to stop him. He might be dangerous."

For over an hour the man talked, ranting incoherently. By that time, we all were sure we were dealing with a madman. When the handbook finally arrived, we looked into it and discovered that the speaker was Gottfried Feder, a member of the Reichstag and the author of the Nazi party programme! (Herr Feder is now in disgrace; he made the fatal mistake of taking his own programme seriously.)

The incident occurred long before the first great Nazi electoral victory and has been almost forgotten. However, it came back to my mind when the newly elected Reichstag met for the first time on October 13, 1930. The session started with an absurd farce. The Nazi group, now 107 strong, changed clothes in the Reichstag cloakroom and marched into the plenary session hall in brownshirt uniforms. The Nazi regalia was prohibited during that period, but their Reichstag members made use of their immunity in the house. Outside, Nazi rowdies staged their first rehearsal of window smashing, rioting, and destruction of Jewish shops, cafés, and department stores.

When I entered the Reichstag hall, my eyes fell immediately on the strange brownshirt group. This was the élite of the "Aryan" race!—this noisy, shouting, uniformed gang. I looked at their faces carefully. The more I studied them, the more I was terrified by what I saw: so many men with the faces of criminals and degenerates. What a degradation to sit in the same place with such a gang! Whoever

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glanced once at them had to be prepared for all the crimes, all the cruelties, and perverse acts that were to take place little more than two years later.

Most striking among them was the former lieutenant, Edmund Heines, with the hardened, brutish features of a "killer". It was he who had announced on posters during his campaign for the Reichstag: "*Feme*-murderer¹ Heines will speak." Heines was one of the men who were killed by order of Hitler in the purge of June 30, 1934; but certainly not because he was a murderer and abnormal—had he not always prided himself on his acts of bestiality?

It was shortly after this ominous beginning that the former naval officer, Hellmut Klotz, came to the Reichstag to see members of the Left. Klotz had been a member of the Nazi party, but had left it after realizing all the mendacity and rottenness of the movement. Klotz had made public letters written by Hitler's intimate friend Captain Ernst Röhm revealing Röhm's perverted sexual life. Klotz had come to the Reichstag that day to discuss further revelations. When I left the plenary hall for a moment and went to the lobby, a man was entering, moaning and covered with blood. It was Captain Klotz. He had been discovered and treacherously attacked by a mob of Nazi Reichstag members led by *Feme*-murderer Heines. When later the June purge came and Hitler tried to sell the world the lie that he had had to kill Röhm and Heines because of their immoral lives, I remembered this scene in the Reichstag when the Nazis almost murdered Klotz because he had

¹ Member of the special execution gang of the Free Corps, an illegal military group; those suspected of "treason" were killed without trial.

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made known the truth which the Führer and his gang wanted hidden.

After the September elections, the German tragedy began. The parliamentary system could not function normally any longer in a parliament where almost half of the members were opposed to democracy. The two strongest groups among these were the 107 Nazis and the 77 Communists. Dr. Brüning, although not enjoying the positive confidence of the house, governed by the tolerance of a majority. Most of the legislative work was accomplished by decree. We did our best to maintain political discussion at a tolerable level. And it was certainly to a great extent due to the extraordinary skill of the Speaker, our friend Paul Löbe, that this level could be maintained until 1932.

A few days after the opening of the Reichstag there was a topic on the agenda on which I was appointed by our group to speak, for I had always dealt with that question in committee. I was warned by some colleagues not to risk provoking the strong Nazi group so soon. A woman, a non-Aryan, and a Social Democrat, I had to be prepared to encounter howling and derision.

"All the more reason to speak," I retorted; "we cannot submit to Nazi standards."

I had scarcely begun to talk when a hail of interruptions—shouts, catcalls, laughter—came from the Nazis. I retorted with a violent attack on the rioters. I bitterly denounced them, speaking only in their direction. From surprise, certainly not from gallantry on their part, my tactics proved successful. The respect I had acquired among all the other

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groups of the Reichstag contributed to this result, although the new economic policies had taken a course where I could no longer vote for or support the government's policy.

The Nazis were still only the opposition—but Nazi economic ideas already were influencing the government's decisions. The cabinet began to move away from the idea of creating freer trade by reciprocal trade treaties and the most-favoured-nation clause. The idea of bilateral treaties began to gain ground. Should I let things go on as the majority wished? But this meant a fatal lowering of the standard of living of the masses. I felt I had no right to acquiesce in this. In many negotiations with the economic expert of the Catholic group, Professor Friedrich Dessauer, and in a number of conferences with Chancellor Brüning of the same party, I did my best to prevent disastrous and irrevocable decisions. Professor Dessauer agreed with me on a number of fundamentals, and we could easily have reached an understanding. But would President Hindenburg sign a decree to which the agrarian parties and the Right were opposed? The lack of a normally functioning parliament was felt more and more as the economic crisis became more acute and the number of unemployed increased. Bold, new ideas were needed. Instead, the government inaugurated a policy of deflation.

Those of us who, as members of the Reichstag, had to decide whether to continue tolerating the cabinet of Dr. Brüning, were faced with a terrible alternative. To continue tolerating Dr. Brüning demanded too great a sacrifice from the labouring masses—but it also

might mean maintaining the republican regime until the depression had passed and improved economic conditions could aid a return to a more normal parliament. Overthrow of Dr. Brüning presented the risk of a still more dictatorial, more reactionary government.

We thought, therefore, that we should first try toleration. But when Dr. Brüning came out with decrees ordering heavy wage cuts and big reductions in relief and in appropriations for other social services, I felt I could no longer share responsibility for this policy. The only justification of this toleration could be the attempt to save democracy and the republic. But who were the people who wanted and supported the regime of democracy? In the first instance, it was the labouring masses. Alienating them by reducing their purchasing power and abrogating hard-won laws protecting their working and social conditions constituted a direct threat to the existence of the republic. Toleration of the Brüning government, therefore, lost whatever meaning it had possessed. I fought for this point of view in our parliamentary group, warning of serious losses in the next electoral test and a weakening of the fighting spirit of our members. But the majority—as so often happened—was against me, and the policy of tolerating the cabinet went on.

In these very difficult times it was most important to keep in closest contact with the electorate. At least once or twice a week I travelled to my constituency and in public meetings I endeavoured to keep our voters informed of what was happening and of why I had voted as I had. Since the elections of

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September, 1930, I had had to fight with the Nazis at almost every one of my meetings. And in most of the gatherings, the Communists too were present. That led to some exciting experiences.

One Sunday afternoon I was to address a meeting in a small town near the Czech border. I had scarcely entered the hall when I sensed that something would happen. I saw a great number of Nazis present, flaunting swastikas, and was told that a surprisingly large number of Communists had appeared as well. During my speech I was interrupted often, but I succeeded in completing what I had to say. When I was through, a Communist took the floor, attacking me, attacking the Weimar constitution and the Weimar republic.

"Away with this system!" he shouted. He was followed by a Nazi. It was almost the same song: "Away with this regime!" When they were through, I was given the floor to comment on the discussion. I made a good start but a "choir" was organized, composed of the two groups. The Communists shouted "Red Front" and the Nazis answered with "Heil Hitler", one of their leaders directing both groups in the manner of a cheer leader at an American football game! Nazis and Kozis were collaborating to shout down a Socialist woman! I felt deeply ashamed for the Communists.

"It must not happen again. We will not have any more meetings without well-organized protection by our republican militia," I told my friends in Dresden. They agreed, and it did not happen again in my constituency.

Soon after, I was asked to speak in Bischofswerda,

an industrial town in Saxony. It was an icy-cold winter night. Slowly the audience arrived. Then the doors opened and in marched a formidable group of young men, each adorned with the swastika. I was pleased. Offence is the best defence, I thought. Changing my topic somewhat, I delivered a well-documented attack on National Socialism. My young visitors, when I was through, seemed uncertain. I had assured them that we offered them a free platform to defend their ideas. They seemed embarrassed and began to whisper among themselves. Meanwhile, the Communists, as usual, had asked for the floor and had started to attack me. While this was going on, one young Nazi came up to me and brought me a letter. It said: "We are sorry—we cannot discuss with non-Aryans." The letter was signed: "German National Socialist Labour Party—local group, Bischofswerda." After the discussion was through, I got up to reply. I had just started, when the entire group of young Nazis stood up and moved to leave the hall.

"Pardon me, young men," I interrupted my talk, "will you not wait a moment? You have written me a letter and I want to give you an answer."

They stopped marching, again seemingly embarrassed. Then their leader stammered: "I am sorry, but we have to catch the last train."

"But we are in Bischofswerda, young men," I retorted. "Why do you have to take a train? Did you not sign your letter: 'Local group, Bischofswerda'?"

Still greater embarrassment. But they stayed there, like good boys, and listened until I had finished. Whether they missed their last train, I cannot say.

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Indeed, they were not from Bischofswerda, but were students from a mining engineering academy at Freiberg, another town of my constituency. The rest of the audience had great fun that evening.

I had already forgotten that incident when I had to address another Sunday meeting in my constituency. To protect this meeting, a strong troop of the republican militia had marched all the way from Bischofswerda. Their presence proved not unnecessary. A still bigger group of Nazis, some of them in brown-shirt uniform, had appeared. This time, after I had ended my talk, a young man with a swastika asked for the floor. Hastily the leader of our republican militia came up and whispered: "Toni, this is the same man that wrote you the letter at the Bischofswerda meeting." Excellent! When the Nazis had shouted long enough and the other speakers during the discussion period had concluded, I told the gathering of the fun we had had in Bischofswerda a few weeks before and asked the Nazi speaker if he always changed his principles so quickly. His race-religion prohibited him from debating with a non-Aryan, I reminded him. I had not changed my race. Had he forgotten his dogma? He did not know what to answer, the poor fellow. They had only to obey orders and not use their own brains.

But these sessions did not always end pleasantly. Many times the Nazis started to riot, fighting and throwing chairs and other objects until it required an actual battle to put them out of the place.

It was my conviction that, although the Nazis were a swamp plant product of the economic crisis, it was not sufficient to combat them with police and negative

measures. We had to prove to the electorate that there was a way out of the depression and despair, and must indicate that way. Together with my colleague, S. Aufhauser, I insisted in the Social Democratic party that our experts must work out a constructive programme on a solid economic basis and translate it into popular language that could be understood by the common man. It took us a long time to win acceptance of our idea. More time was needed before the consent of the trade union movement was obtained. The year 1932 had approached before this programme was published under the title *Socialist Action*. It proposed measures to overcome the crisis. Unfortunately, it was not drawn up in language popular enough to strike home among the masses. It served, however, as a model for the *Plan du travail* worked out in Belgium after Hitler came to power which had a far-reaching effect on the Belgian political scene.

Meanwhile the alliance between respectable society, represented by the Nationalist party of Alfred Hugenberg, and the Nazis had become closer. Hugenberg may have well understood how to become successful in business, but in politics he made blunder after blunder and did his best to lead his party and Germany to disaster. In October, 1931, a great demonstrative gathering at Harzburg, in the Harz mountains, united Hugenberg's party, the nationalist war veterans (the *Stahlhelm*), and the agrarian *Landbund* with the Nazi party and Hitler's brownshirts. General von Seeckt and Dr. Schacht, as well as leaders of heavy industry, were also in the new alliance. But the Nazis dominated the scene, and in a separate gathering of the

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Nazi Reichstag group, they were impudent enough to speak of the organizations allied with them as a disagreeable "medley". However, they said they would later follow Mussolini's example and get rid of them. Again we saw the unholy alliance between Junker and heavy industry—but this time the Nazis, in real control, decided to betray all to whom they made promises.

Soon after Harzburg, the labour movement made a supreme attempt to strengthen its front. The conflict between democracy, represented mainly by labour, and the reaction, backed secretly by portions of the army, was nearing a show-down, and we could enjoy "civil" liberties only when we protected them by our own forces. Democratic principles, not yet deeply rooted in the nation's thought, were challenged by the militant forces of the totalitarian crew. That was why labour unions, labour sport organizations, and the republican militia united and organized their special fighting detachments into the Iron Front. The move awakened great hopes and new courage. Alas! it was not to prove its practical fighting value in the decisive moment. Only in minor skirmishes in and around meeting-places, and in guarding the People's Houses and labour property from Nazi attacks, did it prove useful. Though it showed a courage that entitled it to more decisive tasks, it never presented a united labour front. Dr. Breitscheid, the leader of the Socialist Reichstag group, realizing the extreme seriousness of the hour, in a great speech at a public meeting in Darmstadt, proposed to the Communists a cessation of the differences that separated the two movements. He offered co-

operation in the fight against Hitler's fascism. The next day, November 16, 1931, he received a sneering answer in the *Rote Fahne*, the Communist newspaper in Berlin: "Our chief enemy is the Social Democratic party"!

Was the situation hopeless? One could not help getting this impression. How often in the plenary hall of the Reichstag were we confronted with the grotesque picture of the Nazi, Frick, in eager conversation with the Communist, Torgler. They were planning their tactics together. Through this combination, repeated amnesties were agreed upon—usually with Nazis as the chief beneficiaries. Nazi criminals, whenever they were sentenced to jail, felt pretty sure that their detention would not last long. The agreement on tactics also extended to the handing of votes of no confidence in the Brüning government. To what constructive end could this collaboration ever lead? There was no possibility of the formation of a new government by extreme Right and extreme Left. Who could profit from chaos? Certainly not a disunited labour movement!

An attentive observer in the Reichstag could, in those early years, make a useful study of Nazi methods and techniques. The Nazi members not only were uniformed but behaved like obedient soldiers. Although most of their leaders had been of age for service during the World War, their type of patriotism had permitted them to stay behind the front. Dr. Wilhelm Frick, their leader, now Minister of the Interior, had remained an official in Pirmasens while workers were sacrificing their lives on the battlefields. Dr. Frick had a peculiar concept of duty anyway. As

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a high executive of the Munich police when the Independent Social Democratic member of the Bavarian diet, Gareis, was murdered, he had helped the murderers escape across the border and had given them counterfeit passports.

Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi philosopher, a definitely Slavic type, lived in the Baltic states during the war. He was a Russian subject, and when I asked him during a violent scene in the committee on foreign affairs, "Where were you during the World War?" he became pale and furious and said he would not answer my question.

Goebbels, the dwarf with the clubfoot and the face of a villain, who had studied with the financial help of the Catholic Church, naturally was in a warm home while workers were suffering and bleeding in the dirt of the trenches. Nevertheless, he had the insolence, in one of his speeches from the tribune of the Reichstag, to point with his finger at the Socialist group and to call it the "party of the deserters". Protests came from all decent people present. White with rage, our young, highly capable, and courageous friend, Dr. Kurt Schumacher, asked for the floor. Schumacher had fought for four years in the war. Several times he had been seriously wounded. His back was covered with scars, his right arm lost. He went up to the tribune and in a short extemporaneous speech showed the Nazis' true face, declaring that their success was due to their appeal to the meanest instinct in the human being—"Ihr habt an den inneren Schweinehund im Menschen appelliert", or, in English, "You have appealed to the swinish instincts of the human being."

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How did the very frequent "spontaneous outbreaks" of the Nazi group in the Reichstag happen? I watched them carefully, observed especially Hermann Göring, who had his special function: to represent the upper middle classes in the Hitler movement. He also made some efforts to appear better educated than the mass of his party. However, observing him, I recognized his method. I saw him on different occasions secretly organizing his brownshirts for riots during the sittings of the Reichstag. And when disorder broke out, as prepared, he would stand at the front of the group and pretend to quieten his friends while actually he was inciting them. After his election as Speaker of the Reichstag in 1932, he had an opportunity to display the boasted culture of an educated man. But the part he played then was anything but glorious. Incapable of mastering a turbulent assembly, his only means were threats of violence.

"Shut up or I shall have you expelled"—that was the sum of Göring's wisdom. When a complicated vote was to be taken, he would ask the "Marxist" and former working-man Paul Löbe, at that time vice-president, to take the presidential chair.

These "old fighters" and "tough guys" as their Führer called them, did not for a moment deign to perform any useful work in the Reichstag. What they were ordered to do and what they had most talent for was to prevent constructive parliamentary labour in order to create the chaos which they hoped would enable them to seize power.

Brüning's measures of deflation did not help to overcome the crisis. On the contrary, unemployment

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increased and with it the desperate mood of the victims. Nevertheless, when, in March, 1932, at a moment of great excitement and restlessness, the presidential elections came, the vote in the first poll showed only 30.1 per cent. of the electorate for Hitler, who was a candidate, while Hindenburg obtained 49.6 per cent. and Thälmann, the Communist candidate, 13 per cent. In the second election Hindenburg received six million votes more than Hitler—53 per cent. of the electorate against 36 per cent. for Hitler and 10 per cent. for Thälmann. It was an expression of the extreme weakness of the German republic that there was a choice only between Hitler and Hindenburg and that no other candidate had any chance of success. But Hitler seemed to be defeated, and improving economic conditions might now lead to the complete moral and political recovery of the German people.

But meanwhile all means of vicious intrigue were put assiduously to work. Reichswehr generals, foremost among them Schleicher, were active in Berlin, while the Junkers did their part on the occasion of Hindenburg's visit to his East Prussian estate. By these combined intrigues the scene was prepared for Brüning's overthrow. The schemers worked the now famous trick that led old Hindenburg to believe that Brüning was a Bolshevik. The President had forgotten that it was primarily due to Brüning's efforts that he had been re-elected. He had been told that Brüning wanted to expropriate the Junkers. Behind this accusation was the intention of one of Brüning's cabinet members to partition the heavily mortgaged and practically bankrupt big Prussian estates. The Junkers, accustomed to count for help on the govern-

ment, pressed for a cabinet of their choice and subservient to their interest.

Brüning was dismissed by Hindenburg, and his successor, von Papen, assembled a cabinet that was hostile to the republic—a cabinet composed mostly of members of the nobility. It was the pre-fascist era. The year 1932 became the most stormy that the republic had ever seen. It was a year with six elections—all passions were let loose—our life became almost like that in an insane asylum.

Von Papen's cabinet from the very first day showed its reactionary character. All social institutions were attacked ; heavy new tax burdens were placed on the labouring masses. This government in its first weeks was supported by the Nazis. Von Papen had promised them annulment of the prohibition on the wearing of uniforms by private individuals which, although it had been pronounced much too late, nevertheless had hampered Nazi tactics. He had also pledged removal of the Prussian coalition government and, once again, dissolution of the Reichstag. He was naïve enough to expect the Nazis' continued support after he had given them all they wanted.

Removal of the ban on uniforms had an immediately disastrous effect. Hundreds were killed by Nazis during the following weeks, most of them workers attacked while protecting meetings or labour property. On July 20, 1932, the Prussian coalition government, led by the Socialist, Otto Braun, was removed by military force. The state of siege declared by von Papen had transferred all executive powers from the police to the Reichswehr. This act was obviously illegal. Should the Prussian government and the

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Berlin police have resisted and appealed to the workers to oppose the violation of the law? I thought so, and I still think it should have been done. But the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Karl Severing, declared to the Reichstag group that, weighing the possibilities, he felt that he had no right to sacrifice the lives of thousands of workers in a probable fight with the army. With all respect due to this humane consideration, I still think it would have been better for the German workers to risk their lives in a fight for freedom than to die miserably behind the barbed wire of concentration camps a few months later.

One serious objection to my attitude was voiced: How can the workers fight when they are disunited? Had not the Communists but a short time before combined with the Nazis in a referendum aiming at the overthrow of the same Prussian cabinet that had now been overthrown by the army? Indeed, the situation was as complicated as possible. The electoral campaign took place in an atmosphere of civil war. The republican militia was daily engaged in hard and responsible duty. How many of them gave their lives is unknown. They had often to march for hours. Many of them were unemployed and undernourished. But they were men of a high idealism, and I cannot think of them without a deep feeling of gratitude and admiration.

It was during 1932 that I had with Professor Dessauer of the Catholic party a conversation which turned from our common parliamentary work to the general political situation. I was more than surprised when Professor Dessauer asked: "Don't you think, Frau Sender, it would be wiser that we, the

Catholics, take the Nazis into the cabinet and educate them?"

"For God's sake, Professor, don't make that mistake!" I exclaimed. "Educating the Nazis is attempting an impossible task—they cannot be educated. Haven't you seen their faces? There could be no sanity in such a government. The Catholics would not educate the Nazis; the Nazis would throw the Catholics out!"

Professor Dessauer was expressing an idea which was also in the mind of Dr. Brüning—it only proved that they had not yet recognized the true nature of Nazi fascism.

The elections of July, 1932, were elections by terror. Uniformed Nazis appeared by thousands in the streets, heavily armed. They were very young men, a great number of them living in storm-troop barracks, receiving food and shelter and a small wage. They were encouraged by the attitude of the courts—the judges were more intimidated than the rest of the people and therefore very lenient towards Nazi defendants. In this atmosphere of murder and terror, the Nazis more than doubled their Reichstag vote—they won 36.9 per cent. of the electorate, the highest straight party vote ever attained by them as long as Germany was free to vote.

Immediately afterwards came the "night of the long knives", previously promised by the Nazis. It started in East Prussia. Storm troopers threw bombs into the houses of political opponents, broke into homes, and shot men before the eyes of their wives. Dynamite attacks on the houses of Socialists, Communists, and middle-class opponents of the Nazis followed. One

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of the most ghastly acts was committed in Potempa, in Upper Silesia. Five heavily armed storm troopers entered the house of an agricultural worker during the night. They dragged the man out of his bed and, before the eyes of his mother, jumped on him with their heavy boots, until, his throat torn, he gave up his life.

When the court could not avoid sentencing to death the men who committed this ghastly bestiality, it was Adolf Hitler who wired the murderers :

“ My comrades, I feel united with you in unlimited fidelity.”

All that remained of a civilized world was appalled.

XII

ESCAPE FROM TERROR

THIS was the kind of opposition I had to deal with in my meetings : During one of the campaigns of 1932 we organized a mass rally in Dresden's biggest meeting place, the Circus. Soon after I arrived, my eyes began to burn painfully, and my mouth and nose felt irritated. I suddenly felt sick. Nazis had appeared to break up the meeting. They had brought with them stink-bombs, which they threw from the balconies around the speaker's platform. I saw fainting men and women carried out on stretchers. But they would not succeed, Otto Braun and I—we were to be the speakers—said to ourselves. Our throats badly affected, we summoned all our energy and made our speeches.

Another time, when I came out of a hall to take my car, the chauffeur told me : " All the tyres have been cut. From now on we must watch the cars during your talks."

It was late in the night when I came out of another meeting-place after a hard fight with the Nazis. One of the policemen sent to watch the gathering asked to see me alone.

" I have just been informed that a Nazi motor-cycle squad is waiting for you at the cross-roads outside the

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village near the woods. I have been ordered to warn you not to use that road on your way back," he said.

We had to drive in the opposite direction to avoid our would-be attackers.

My Berlin apartment was in Wilmersdorf, a middle-class district made up largely of new buildings. On every possible occasion all the apartments around mine hoisted the swastika. The only red flag fluttered from my windows—but not for very long, for the Nazis would bring it down. I bought another one and during the next election campaign it would again anger the brownshirts of my neighbourhood. They became more violent. Stones were thrown through my windows. From the summer of 1932 on, they found another way to make life miserable for me. They would call me up at any and all times of the night. Posing as friends, they would try to get information from me. I had, however, become very careful, having been advised by informed persons that my telephone wire was tapped. It became a nerve-racking life.

There were still other methods short of physical attack that could be used by the type of people we now had to deal with. The German Nationalists, Hugenberg's party, published an election book of caricatures and devoted a paragraph in it to me. In the introduction they asserted that I had sex appeal, and then they wrote a parody on the song Marlene Dietrich sang in her first film, *The Blue Angel*. The parody went :

*Ich bin von Kopf zu Fusse
aufs Zentrum eingestellt
Das ist meine politische Halbwelt
und sonst gar nichts.*

Toni Sender

I am from head to foot
In the Centrists' bond,
That is my political demimonde,
And nothing else matters.

This parody was printed in newspapers throughout Europe and America. Of course, it became well known in Germany.

All my political friends were indignant. The executive of our parliamentary group decided that I had to sue the editors of the book. My dear friend Otto Landsberg, a lawyer and one of the most cultured men I have ever met, took the case. He applied for an injunction to halt further circulation of the publication as injurious to my honour as a woman. The appeal was turned down by the county court as well as by the superior court. It was expecting too much of our judges to think we could find justice at their hands. These gentlemen saw the rising wave of fascism and had themselves begun the process of co-ordination.

It was not long afterwards that a number of people informed me of a slander that was being systematically spread against me by Nazis of my constituency. In streets and public houses they were saying nothing more nor less than that I was a prostitute. The story went that I led an extravagant life, that I had a number of expensive fur coats, but that when I went to workers' meetings I donned proletarian clothes. The details varied somewhat, but the main feature, that I was a prostitute, always reappeared. After my recent experience with the courts I was not too strongly inclined to sue the slanderers. It was a vain hope to expect the noble justices to render justice to

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an anti-Nazi and defend the honour of a woman. However, witnesses of the slander, people who were not members of our party, but who respected me, came to the party office and offered to testify in my behalf in the event of a trial. The party office, therefore, thought it was my duty to sue, feeling that the courageous attitude of citizens ready to testify against the Nazis in a time when it was dangerous to do so could not be ignored.

The trial came. Otto Landsberg again was my lawyer. I could not be disappointed, having only contempt for the majority of the judges. I was, however, curious to see how they would handle the case if our witnesses stuck to their testimony. And our witnesses did remain firm and told what they had heard. But the Nazis, trusting to the judges' bias, found an easy way out. They sent three of their men with orders to testify under oath that they had been present at the conversation (which our witnesses denied) and that they had heard my name mentioned but not the incriminating remark. They insisted they would have heard it had the remark been made. According to all previous practice of the courts, positive assertions cannot be refuted by negative ones. But in this case the judges declared that the conflicting statements cancelled each other, and they acquitted the defendant. That the Nazis had committed perjury did not concern the judges any more than did the honour of an anti-Nazi woman. The only thing that seemed important to them was the preservation of their jobs in the event of a Nazi victory. Those who fought fascism in Germany were outlawed long before the Nazis seized power. We had to run the gauntlet and needed strong

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nerves, not only to meet the ruthlessness of Nazi gangsters, but also on account of the cowardice of those whose duty it was to ensure observance of the law.

The Reichstag elected in July, 1932, did not survive its first meeting. When it met on September 12 motions were presented to repeal the most anti-social of the decrees published by the von Papen government. Just at the moment this was being voted on, von Papen presented the order signed by the President for dissolution of the Reichstag. The reason given was the fear that the Reichstag would cancel the decrees. Such a cancellation, however, was the legal right of the Reichstag, guaranteed by the constitution. Göring, for the first time elected Speaker of the Reichstag, pretended to protest in defence of democratic rights ! It was a real farce—the fascists, known as despisers of the constitution, playing the role of its defenders !

I attended the meetings of the special committee that exercised the rights of the Reichstag when that body was not assembled and witnessed how the Nazis attempted to defend the rights of the people's representatives. They had no legal or technical knowledge, were inexperienced and clumsy. They came to ask Dr. Rudolf Breitscheid for advice. He replied with sarcastic humour.

"Don't you think," he said, "that it is fortunate your Führer's intention has not yet been carried through ? He said before the Supreme Court in Leipzig that heads would roll in the sand once he assumed power. You could hardly get advice from our heads if they were rolling in the sand."

Why were the Nazis suddenly opposed to new

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elections, they who had always striven for dissolution and new elections at the time of the worst depression, hoping to profit from the chaos? Did they know they were on the decline?

Another campaign had to be fought. We lost some 700,000 votes to the Communists, but the most sensational fact of the election of November 6, 1932, was that the Nazis lost two million votes. So it was not an irresistible rise that gave power to these prophets of violence! Economic conditions had begun, although slowly, to improve.

Shortly before the elections, the Nazis used spectacular tactics in their bid for labour votes. They combined with the Communists in the leadership of a strike on the Berlin city-owned transport system. Although the workers' poll had not resulted in the majority needed for a strike, a walk-out was enforced by violent means. I assume the employers were not deceived by the Nazi attitude. I know of an earlier strike in which the metal workers apparently had Nazi support, which didn't in the least alarm the industrialists. A report which I received of a secret meeting of the industrialists of Saxony showed that the Nazi leader had explained to them: "Do not misjudge our attitude. We Nazis intend to bring you the workers and therefore must act in such a manner as to win their confidence. Later you will have no more trade unions, no more strikers. . . ."

Never was the standard of political morality so low in Germany as when the so-called aristocrats ("*Herren*") headed the cabinet. As a consequence of intrigues, the von Papen government was overthrown, and General von Schleicher's cabinet was born. And the

general was thrown out by the very methods he had used to gain office. Schleicher's programme, it must be admitted, gave proof of a greater understanding of social needs. He restored some of labour's rights, and he refused to permit suppression of a tremendous scandal. In this last short-lived legal Reichstag of the republic, the Socialists uncovered great corruption in the form of government credits given under the title "aid to the East" (*Osthilfe*) to a small group of Junkers, landowners whose poor management had led to high indebtedness. Hermine, wife of the former Kaiser, and influential reactionary political leaders were among them. The Hindenburg family had received no less than 620,000 marks !

The history of all the intrigues that followed has not yet been completely revealed. However, that the scandal of this corruption, covered up by the Nazis, was the spring-board from which the fascists were to jump into power is a historic fact. In the house of the Cologne banker, Baron Kurt von Schröder, the pact between Hitler and the President was sealed with the help of the master intriguer, Franz von Papen. By the end of January Adolf Hitler was Chancellor of Germany—the man who two months before was in a desperate mood because he saw himself faced with failure. He had achieved his goal. He would now show how fascists run elections.

Immediately he set out to lay the foundations for a Nazi state. Almost every day a new high official was driven from office and a died-in-the-wool Nazi put in his place. A systematic transformation was going on in the police power. I was highly alarmed. Would we let them gradually but surely come into power

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without any resistance by the workers? Impossible. Why had we built the Iron Front, made all kinds of preparations, if not to fight? If we waited too long, it might be too late. A few days after Hitler had become Chancellor, I was working in my office at the magazine *Frauenwelt* and decided to go up to the office of the party executive, located in the same building, to talk matters over with the party heads. I met only comrade C.

"Comrade C.," I told him, "I think the time has come to give an indication to the Iron Front that we must resist the establishment of fascism in Germany."

"In what way should the fight be started? The others have the arms."

"I know. But we have still one powerful weapon, used successfully before—the general strike," I answered.

"But Toni, what would be the immediate cause of this strike—with what slogan could we rally the workers?"

"Don't you see that the Nazis are beginning to penetrate all key positions of the state and the administration? If we have any thought of resisting counter-revolution, this may be our last chance. Hitler won't offer us an easy slogan—but the masses will understand."

Comrade C. shook his head. He did not think the right moment had arrived, and while we were still talking, Professor Decker, a common friend, joined us.

"Toni wants a general strike now," Comrade C. greeted Professor Decker. "What do you think of it?"

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Decker did not commit himself—and I left gravely concerned about further developments.

I had to leave for my constituency. Another electoral campaign, the first under Nazi rule, had started. It seemed obvious that the Nazis could not obtain a majority by legal means. Therefore we had to be prepared for all kinds of surprises. They had their chance now and would not let it be wrested from them. I was asked by Socialists in many constituencies outside my own to come and help them. I did as much as I could. Of course, I would help my old friends in Hamburg, in Bremen. All these meetings were held despite threats by the Nazis, with the police as a rule helping the fascists by notifying me that I had no right to attack the government! An anti-fascist campaign without the right to criticize the fascists in power! But everywhere I met a fine fighting spirit among the Socialist workers. My impression was that they were only waiting for the order from the central body of the movement to fight for their rights and their freedom.

I decided to stop in Berlin for a few hours on my way back to Dresden. I wanted to talk to the party executive, to make sure that there was a decision to fight before all was lost. I had not been in my apartment more than a few minutes when my telephone bell rang.

"Hello!" the voice said. "I wanted to know if you were in—if so I shall come. Please wait."

"All right. I shall wait for you."

Although he had not given his name, I recognized the voice of a good friend who until a short time before had been a minister of state. He soon arrived.

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"I have only a few minutes," he said at once. "I did not call you from my house. It would have been too dangerous. I have important information for you. An officer of the brownshirt army told me that your name is on a black list with those of three other persons [whom he named to me]. Something grave will happen to you about March 5. I don't know whether before or after. At any rate, his advice to you is to vanish as quickly as possible."

"Thank you ever so much for this real friendship," I replied. "For the time being, however, I cannot do anything but go on with the fight. As long as it is still possible, I shall go back to my constituency. I hope to see you again. If not, I shall never forget your service to me."

But before going back to Dresden I looked up the president and Reichstag leader of our party, Otto Wels. He came to speak to me alone, as I had requested.

"Comrade Wels," I said, "you told me some time ago that the labour movement had decided to fight the decisive battle against fascism. I have been around the country and have gained the impression that the men of the Iron Front are waiting for your orders. I know all the difficulties of the present hour. I am aware of the fact that we haven't the arms. It may be that our fight will not end in victory—even in that case it is better to be defeated in a battle than to lose without a struggle. Should the labour movement be forced underground, we can appeal to the workers only if we have first used whatever is left of our power to prevent them from becoming enslaved."

"I know it, Toni. And take this word with you,"

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Wels replied. "We shall fight—probably before March 5."

The answer encouraged me. It enabled me to go on with the fight, to take new chances. I was convinced that Otto Wels meant what he said to me—and I still think so. What the powers were that prevented him from carrying out this intention I never learned exactly. My impression is that at the decisive moment the trade union leadership decided they could not follow the party's lead. And, of course, the trade unions had to be the basis of any resistance.

Confident, I took the train for Dresden. For the following Sunday we had planned a great open-air rally in a stadium. It was cold and the ground was covered with snow. But our Dresden labour movement was composed of tried, reliable men and women. Never shall I forget the sight of those sixty-five thousand standing in the snow on that cold Sunday afternoon. I thought of my talk with Comrade Wels and spoke to them, aware of the gravity of the moment, but encouraging them for the struggle to come. Before I began, a police officer had warned me to be "careful". And during my short speech he stepped forward several times to repeat his warning—but I finished my talk without disturbance.

The report of the meeting in next day's Dresden Nazi paper was menacing. The government of Saxony was asked to muzzle me. But I went on addressing my meetings. After the last speech of Monday night, February 28, I met in the main Dresden station my friend Wilhelm Sander, the party's district secretary, and his wife. We were startled by a news flash: "The Reichstag is in flames." Our suspicion

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that only the Nazis could be interested in having the Reichstag building burn down found confirmation in the way the Nazis broadcast the news all the following day. They had shown that they would not hesitate to take any criminal step.

In Dresden they published a paper called the *Judenspiegel* (Jews' Mirror). The entire first page was covered with my picture and under it the text hinted that I ought to be done away with.

The atmosphere around me became feverish. Streets were crowded with heavily armed brown-shirts, one, sometimes two, revolvers in their belts. Some had hand grenades. Since almost everybody knew me in Dresden to walk by myself through the crowded streets became a venture. I went to the party office, and while I was discussing the situation with Sander, one of our leading comrades arrived. Breathlessly he asked: "Have you seen the new leaflet the Nazis are distributing about you? It contains an open threat of murder."

"Can you let me have one?" I answered.

Meanwhile mass arrests had started in Berlin. One after another of our Social Democratic newspapers was prohibited—our Dresden paper, too, was suppressed. I continued to drive to my out-of-town meetings alone. The government of Saxony had been forced to take storm troopers into the police force as auxiliaries. My meetings were protected by crowds of policemen; the government was aware of the danger that threatened. But what odd protection, by police interspersed with Nazis, my enemies! When I was through with a meeting in one village the head of the police came to pay his respects to what he said was

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my courage. It was heartening to find support in such a quarter.

The campaign was nearing its end. I was warned from many sides of the pogrom atmosphere created around my name. I had always been aware of the fact that a person in the political battle-front in revolutionary or counter-revolutionary times has to be prepared to die an unnatural death. But I was thinking of death in battle—not of treacherous murder. And I still hoped, though faintly, for the last fight.

Every night I wondered that I was still alive. Storm troopers tried to arrest me in Berlin, where it had been announced through an error that I would speak at a meeting. The ring around me began to grow smaller.

I remembered the offer of a good friend of mine, a worker.

"Whenever you are in great danger," he had told me, "come to see me. I know every stone along the Czech border. I shall help you. Count on me."

With the help of my friends I managed to get to the village. I entered the house of the friend—he was not in. He too had been compelled to flee. I did not know his wife. Did she share her husband's convictions? Could I tell her what brought me to her at this unusual hour? After a short conversation, she said:

"You can tell me the purpose of your coming—you may have confidence in me."

I trusted her. After I told her, she replied:

"I can do the job as well as my husband. Let us go together. I shall be ready in a few minutes. Take off your hat—we must travel off the roads, behind the houses. You must dress like a native woman."

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Together we started to leave the house. At that moment a man came in.

"Don't be disturbed. I just wanted to ask you if you know that the entire border is occupied by storm troopers," he said.

We had not known that. And he did not realize how valuable was his inadvertent warning.

"Take my arm and come with me," the woman said. "Don't look around or they might recognize you. Let us try to look absolutely innocent."

Our hearts beat quickly as she cautiously led the way. We skirted all main roads and avoided meeting any people—too many knew me from my years of campaigning in the district. Behind houses, through paths and fields, over creeks we went, fearing to turn our heads yet watching every movement, every shadow. Each minute became an hour. It seemed as if our walking would never end. . . .

"We are in Czechoslovakia," the comforting words finally came. She sensed that I was about to embrace her.

"Nothing of the kind," she said in a low voice. "They may still see us, and I must go back to my family across the border."

She accompanied me to a farm-house where there were Czech friends of hers. They helped me get a car to take me to the next small town. It was a painful moment when I had to part from the fine, courageous woman. I never shall forget her.

Safe ! Free ! But is this Czechoslovakia—this town with its many swastika flags and swastika emblems ? The unbearable terrors seemed to have crossed the frontier.

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A friend, Dr. Kurt Löwenstein, had preceded me. I tried to trace him. He had been attacked by storm troopers in his apartment in Berlin during the night, had barricaded himself and his wife behind furniture in their bedroom. Dozens of shots went through their door—but almost by a miracle they had escaped unhurt. However, the storm troopers did not give up their hunt. So he, too, and his brave wife, had to flee for their lives.

What was our crime? To have loved freedom too much. But how could I help it? Was not my entire life a struggle for more liberty—for social conditions under which every individual could feel and satisfy the need which alone makes us human?

XIII

REDEDICATION

I FOUND Kurt Löwenstein. We had to stay the few remaining hours of the night in the village where we had met. Since I was without luggage, I had awakened the suspicion of the porter in the little inn and preferred to leave early the next morning. Both of us had friends on the Czech side of the border. I wanted to remain in direct contact with the workers of Saxony in order to be ready immediately, should the first sign of a fight develop. My goal, to reach the border town, was not without danger. The trains we took sometimes touched German soil, and we could not inquire of the train employees, most of whom spoke only the Czech language.

When I finally reached my friend, K., he at once offered me asylum in his home. We immediately set about establishing contact with Saxony. One day we would send a comrade to Germany, and the next day one of their men or women would come to report to us. We established the first news service from the land of the barbarians.

The cruelties practised were worse than a normal imagination could conceive. The eyes of one of our women filled with tears as she described how her husband had been taken to the torture cellar of the

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secret police and beaten until he was half dead. When her love and courage finally brought him out of the hands of the Gestapo, his physical suffering, and even more his mental suffering, were so terrible that he would no longer speak.

The people living in the neighbourhood of the Dresden People's House, stolen from us and used as a house of torture by the secret police, complained that they heard every night the cries and moaning of the unfortunate victims of Nazi sadism.

For a brief while it seemed as though there would be resistance—the shop stewards in my constituency had met and deliberated and were ready to launch a general strike if the trade union executive of Berlin approved of it. The delegates sent to Berlin, however, brought a negative answer, so that the movement was stopped at its birth. There was too much discipline in the German working classes.

The comradeship of the German-speaking Socialists of the Sudetenland will be for ever memorable. Frau K., with all the cares of her household on her shoulders, seemed never to tire in spite of the fact that her home became more crowded every day by an increasing number of refugees and messengers from the other side; she always remained the friendly, patient hostess. How badly rewarded was her rich humanity, and that of many other friends. Five years later, when the Nazis invaded the Sudetenland, there was no friendly neighbour to give them a helping hand. The Czech republic, which they had so bravely supported, drove the fugitives back into the arms of the invader.

In spite of Frau K.'s hospitality, I suffered a terrible

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breakdown, physically and spiritually. I had a high fever and was very weak—a relapse into my old illness. However, I could not afford to lose my energy at that point. I did not want my family, especially my mother, to learn of my whereabouts. Only in this way could they in good conscience deny knowledge of my whereabouts, should the Nazis interrogate them.

But physical suffering was easier to bear than the breakdown of morale. Had all the efforts and sacrifices of almost twenty years been in vain? Was Germany lost for ever to the civilized world? Did this defeat mean that violence is stronger than the mind and always will be?

These doubts were torturing—but a thorough examination of them had to be made. However, after a short time, comrades from over the border came to tell us how courageous and steadfast was the spirit of all those who had gone through the experience and the schooling of our labour movement. They would not become Nazis—they could be silenced for the moment by means of an unparalleled terrorism, but their convictions would remain deep and firm. They felt that their day would come again. Maybe the nation had first to go through hell, but out of that terrible suffering, some day, a free nation would emerge—not the strife-torn republic of Weimar, but a free community, strongly rooted in a new social order. At least these were the words of a young comrade whom I met later at the border, one of the heroic unknown soldiers of the underground movement.

So it had not been all in vain. The fight could still go on. Not any longer in the country where I had been born—but wherever in the world people are

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striving for social justice, genuine freedom, and humanity, one may feel the atmosphere of a homeland.

My friends in Czechoslovakia offered me journalistic work there. I decided, however, not to accept it—for two reasons. One was the geography of the Czech republic, in connection with Hitler's programme as expressed in *Mein Kampf*, and the second the expectation that many more refugees would come to a land where they could use their own German language. Since I knew other languages, I could well wander farther. My thought was Paris.

On my way to the French capital I stopped in Belgium. I wanted to establish contact again with my family. I was surprised and happy to meet my mother at my sister's house in Antwerp. She had come only on a visit, not yet aware that it would become her home.

I had scarcely arrived in Antwerp when my old friend Willem Eekelers called me up. He wanted to see me, wanted me to write for their daily newspaper, the *Volksgazet*, to explain the strange events in Germany. Willem showed not only genuine understanding, but also true comradeship. It happened that there was a vacancy in the editorial department of the *Volksgazet*. He would propose me as an editorial writer on foreign affairs. Sooner than I could have expected, I was settled. I had to study the Flemish language, spoken almost exclusively in this part of Belgium. My colleagues on the paper received me in a fine spirit, and especially the managing editor, Adolf Molter, proved to be a person of rare tact and culture. I slowly recovered physically, and was kept busy in my new task.

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Camille Huysmans, the director of the paper, who came in the early hours every morning to dictate his column, was at the same time mayor of the city and its member of the Chamber. I knew him well from the many international conventions we had both attended, and also from our national party conventions, to which he had been a fraternal delegate. He is one of the most striking figures in the international labour movement. Tall and very slender, he seems to personify Mephistopheles, whom he loves, and to whom he attributes many amiable qualities. Camille loved by all the people of his city, including those who do not vote for him, has very diversified interests and has even tried his hand at writing plays. He stood courageously throughout the war for his convictions as an internationalist, having been before the war the secretary of the Second International. But the outlaw of 1914 showed such strength of character that he later became the respected Speaker of the Belgian Chamber. Camille was almost always in good humour, and he brought a cheerful spirit to our common workroom. There was only one important disagreement between us: Camille insisted that I should marry, although I doubt whether his own philosophy would have prevented him from enjoying life without a licence.

I soon became active in the labour movement, conducted a study class for young women, and addressed some public meetings in the Flemish language. However, in spite of all the friendship shown to me, I felt very lonely. What was more important, I doubted whether it was a really useful life I was leading in this Flemish city of small Belgium. It was like a step

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into freedom, into real life, when upon an invitation from friends received in 1934, I could go on a three months' lecture tour to the United States, a tour that carried me across the continent from coast to coast. Another invitation reached me by the end of 1935. I accepted gratefully, and this time I travelled through most of the southern states. What a vast, wonderful, young country!—the majority of its people open-minded, less prejudiced than on the old continent, and with a ready acceptance of fraternity that reflects the best traditions of pioneer times. Would I not feel much more at home here, and perhaps some day be able to make my contribution to America?

When the lecture tour was over and I had to think of going back to Belgium and to my position on the newspaper there, I hesitated. Going back meant security and proximity to Germany, with the possibility of contact with old friends. But was it also a useful life? On the other hand, staying in, or rather returning to, the United States also presented problems. It would open to me the chance to become a citizen of a free and democratic nation—to start life anew and to render service to the new country of my choice—yet it would also mean a rather difficult struggle for a livelihood. But I made up my mind—far better a full, interesting life than economic security!

One chapter of my life was closed. No, I would not forget the German working classes; I would always feel very near to them as well as to the better, the decent Germany. Should there at any moment arise a movement against the gang that at present dishonours the German people, should a revolutionary

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movement attempt to get rid of Nazism, and my friends over there think my service useful for the cause, I would not question for a moment my duty to rush there and help them. That I shall ever desire to live in that country again, I doubt. Too many people looked on when depravity ruled. Of course, I understand German history better perhaps than many Germans who have never been outside their own country and thus had no opportunity to compare their own development with that of other nations. I, at least, can discern what led up to the present situation.

Revolutions in Germany have never been completed—but counter-revolutions have been thorough, complete, and cruel. The new Germany of the republic never succeeded in abolishing completely the old Prussian tradition of militarism as a political power and the habit of blind discipline. The army always remained an independent body, unassimilated by republican institutions.

The republic, although it created a great number of outstanding services, rights, and achievements, not only did not understand how to make the people of the nation conscious of these creations, but was too prosaic, dreary, and rational ; it did not arouse the necessary enthusiasm for the new rights and the newly gained democracy. It should have realized that the German people had a particularly great need for romanticism.

It must be said, in fairness to the German republican leaders, that they were not given a fair chance by the victorious democratic nations. Beginning with the armistice and the peace treaty, with the treatment of the republic after it signed the Versailles document,

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with the permanent reprisals and the humiliations of the young democracy, the pride of a nationally sensitive people was badly hurt. Add to this the fact of the republic's disarmament while the promise to follow it by the disarmament of the victor nations never was kept.

All these conditions worked together during the long, serious economic crisis to make a great number of people doubt all values, past and present. It resulted in their being caught by the exploiters of their inferiority complex, who preached the religion of nationalism.

Of course, these exploiters were helped by those men and women of the middle classes who were frightened by the idea of a change in the social order and could see in it only bolshevism. The masters of big business and high finance supported the brown-shirt army for the sake of preserving their own privileges. So great was the confidence of these men in the reactionary attitude of the preachers of the Nazi creed that they did not mind the fact that Nazi fascism advertised its destructive tendency as a revolutionary force; the industrialists and bankers were convinced that the Nazis would save their social position and economic privileges. However, the Nazis betrayed not only the small men, but to some extent also the financiers. Private ownership of the means of production still exists—but the owner of property may not freely dispose of it. The state, as represented by the ruling gang, has become almighty, controlling not only all intellectual, religious, and social life, but also all business activity. The once so proud property owner may, for instance, no longer use his own judg-

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ment in the investment of the capital accumulated through his enterprise, but has to follow the orders of Hermann Göring and the dictators of the four-year plan. Everything is subordinated to the purpose of a gigantic preparation for war.

Into this preparation for war fascism forces other European countries and also the entire world. Fascism has developed the tendency to become a world religion, spreading propaganda all over the world with the help of government finances. Democracy is challenged over the entire globe. Will the era of freedom come to an end?

It must not be so. And the United States may have the historic mission to set an example. Its vast land, its rich natural resources, the youth of the country and the open-mindedness and optimism of the people, offer the statesmen of the nation an outstanding opportunity—a chance to build up a well-functioning democracy, adapt the concepts inherited from the past to the needs of our present day, think over the great ideals of democracy and bring them to life. Political democracy not only is challenged but is in actual danger unless it is accompanied by the establishment of social justice.

However, the most far-sighted statesman cannot be successful if we are not able to maintain well-functioning democratic machinery. What is it that makes fascism attractive to some people? First, that it is able to act quickly and efficiently; second, its apparent unification of the nation. A closer examination, however, shows that fascist efficiency destroys all the cultural and moral values of a nation, while its unification of the nation is only a unity in fear of terror.

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Democracy can challenge fascism by setting an example of genuinely free institutions capable of rapid functioning, especially in the emergencies that arise continually in this period of modern industrialism. A democracy's institutions, therefore, have to be adapted constantly to the needs of the time in order to maintain the fundamentals of liberty.

Fortunately, the people of the United States are less prejudiced and more open-minded than the peoples of the old continent. They may, therefore, be able to demonstrate the possibility of a free people's achieving greater unity on a number of broad issues—a unity not only *against* those things we detest, like war and fascism, but *in favour of* those institutions which make possible a workable democracy.

However, there must be a well-informed public opinion. Adult education cannot be considered a side-show of democracy ; it is not a luxury of extraordinary times ; it is a regular ingredient of democracy. A healthy instinct of the people of America has made many of them appreciate the need and value of a well-informed public opinion. I know of no country where open forums and discussion groups of all kinds are so popular as there. Let the sophisticated European smile at them—he may have ceased to be of great use to us. And let us build on our fruitful beginning by giving the youth of the nation a thorough education for good citizenship and by developing further adult education so that it may accomplish its function of creating an alert, well-informed, intelligent public.

Hitler has deprived me of my citizenship and property. It was the punishment for my love for liberty. I was a woman without a country until I

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went to the United States. Here love for freedom is an asset and not a liability. Bold and new ideas are permitted—here it is still worth while to place your modest capacity at the disposal of the common good.

Liberty is to me not only an indispensable element of life, but also an obligation—an obligation towards the community that grants me the privilege of becoming one of its members. I thank America for accepting me and giving me an opportunity to start a new chapter of my life, a chapter that I will devote to the cultivation of the ideals for which the best of mankind has fought and died.

Acc. No.	14512
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Book No.	1544